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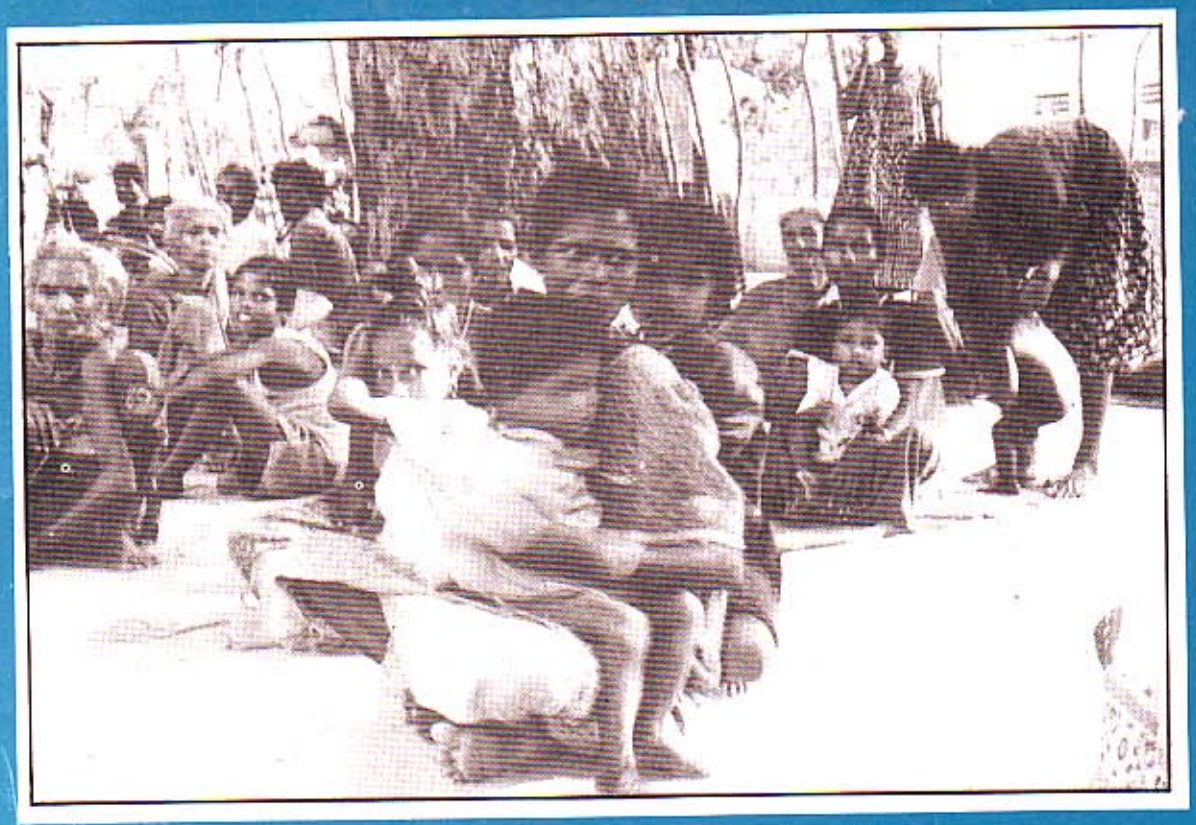

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– Voltaire

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CONTENTS

The Displaced People – No End To Their Suffering.....4

News Review.....5

LTTE Leader Seeks Support From Tamil Nadu People.....8

On Progressing to Peace Through War.....9

Change in International Perception – Illusion of External Intervention.....11

The Exodus from Jaffna – Part 1.....15

Capture of Jaffna – What Next?.....26

Proxy War Against India.....27

Classified.....30

The Historic Question

In some countries of the world where there have been protracted armed conflicts accompanied by atrocities of the worst kind and leading to death and destruction of an unaccountable number of lives and properties, people and their political leaders found the courage and strength of character to chart a course in the past year which sought to bring an end to their long suffering. This has been the case in South Africa, Palestine and Northern Ireland. Not that all the problems of these conflicts have been resolved finally, but at least the carnage and the atrocities have come to an end, and the political processes have offered them a new beginning of hope to live in peace and dignity.

Sadly this has not been the case in Sri Lanka which also has been rocked and ravaged for years by violent ethnic conflict. The year 1995 began with much hope and expectation with the continuation of the peace process initiated by the government at the end of 1994, the talks and the cessation of hostilities between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in January 1995. All hope and expectation were dashed with the resumption of fighting between the parties in April 1995 and the year ended in tragedy for the hundreds of thousands of Tamil people, particularly for those from the Jaffna peninsula, who were forced to evacuate from their homes and flee into the Vanni region.

While on the one hand, the Sri Lankan military and the government were celebrating the 'capture of Jaffna' and raising the lion flag to symbolise a successful 'conquest', the LTTE on the other hand proclaimed that it had performed a 'historic duty' on behalf of the people by evacuating them to prevent them living in areas under occupation by the advancing Sri Lankan army and thereby deprive the government of a 'political victory' it was seeking.

But the reality for an estimated 300,000 displaced people is that they have been forced to live in conditions of unimaginable suffering in makeshift refugee camps in the Vadamaradchi, Thenmaradchi and the Vanni areas. The living conditions of the members of a whole community turned refugees overnight reflected in images of photographs are truly heart-rending. For these people, the end of 1995 did not offer any Christmas cheer and the advent of 1996 that ushered in the New Year did not bring them anything but the tragedy of surviving as refugees experiencing a pitiable present and facing an uncertain future.

During the past several years of conflict, an estimated 300,000 Tamils have gone abroad firstly to seek refuge and gradually to find almost a permanent and settled home for themselves and their children. The members of the expatriate Sri Lankan Tamil community living in various countries have been building social, educational, economic and other infrastructures of their own which seem to suggest they are in these countries for good, for all time and most probably never to return to their 'homeland'.

Following the resumption of fighting in June 1990 between the Premadasa government and the LTTE and until the cessation of hostilities between the Kumaratunga government and the LTTE in January 1995, an estimated 100 to 150 thousand people had left the Northeast to seek safety in the south of the island, particularly to Colombo and adjoining areas. After the April 95 resumption of fighting, there has been a further movement of a substantial number of people of the Northeast to the south. Now following the latest military offensive in Jaffna, almost the entire people in the 'captured areas' have been uprooted and they are forced to seek fresh havens and pastures in the jungle infested Vanni areas.

It must be self-evident that today the Tamil community of Sri Lanka finds itself in a state of total dismemberment raising the question as to how long it can survive as a community retaining its distinct identity as a people. For a numerically depleting community of two-and-a-half million in a total population of seventeen million, the unending departure, for whatever reason, of so many hundreds of thousands of its members from their historical habitats within a matter of just twelve to thirteen years ought to have an adverse impact on its ability to retain its vitality and identity as a people in their own birth place.

The historic question that faces those who have got the power and ability to decide for and in the name of the Tamil people is whether they are prepared to seek and grasp the opportunities that are presented and to come to terms with practical and achievable solutions at a given historical conjuncture, or permit the continuation of the dismemberment and dispersal of the Tamil people until eventually they turn out to be a community in diaspora.

The Displaced People — No End To Their Suffering

by Rita Sebastian

VAVUNIYA – 'We are not refugees. We are travellers'. M. Karthigesu a young businessman is affronted at being described as a refugee. He pulls out his meal coupon and points to the word 'Refugee' marked on it. Three meals have been ticked off. He had arrived at the transit camp at Veppankulam only a day earlier.

But Karthigesu's dilemma is that he doesn't know when he will be able to entrain for Colombo. It could take anything from 3 to five days, possibly more, if the police report does not come in time or his friends or relations don't come to pick him up.

Saraswathy Nadarajah, 65, is suffering from post-operative complications. She needs urgent medical treatment. She is also waiting impatiently like Karthigesu to get 'clearance' from the security authorities to travel to Colombo.

For those already displaced from the northern peninsula the road to the southern mainland is long and hard. When they arrive at Nochimoddai on the northwestern Vavuniya border they have already walked a 4 kilometre stretch, the no-man's land between the defence lines of the two warring sides, the government forces and the Tigers.

At this first point of entry they are minutely checked. Then on to the Thandikulam checkpoint, 2 kilometres away, for further checking before being released into a large open area adjoining the checkpoint, where they are photographed and special passes issued. They are then taken to the first transit camp at Veppamukalam, a few kilometres away on the Mannar Road.

The Paddy stores turned into a transit camp is swarming with people. Men, women and children. Some have already been there a few days, others newly arrived clutching onto their baggage have still to be assigned accommodation. Basic amenities at the camps leave much to be desired and you can sense the anger and frustration of people who feel that they are being penalised for no fault of their own.

The Rs. 25 per person a day for meals at the transit camp has now been increased to Rs. 45 and according to officials the quality of the food has improved.

But the quality of the food is not what irks these civilians transiting to the southern mainland. It is 'the security reasons' adduced for their forced stay in the camps. Once cleared from Veppamukalam they are taken to a second transit camp near the Vavuniya railway station. It is from here that about 250 people are released daily after a final check. 'They can be checked again in the train' adds an official, rather flippantly.

'Security' today covers just about everything and our voice for a quick release from these camps, which are virtual prisons are 'hardly heard back in Colombo' says a teacher, his mind revolting against the indignities of communal living.

'It is no different on the other side. It is we poor civilians who have always paid the price in the 12-year conflict' he says more in sorrow than in anger.

Several complaints from Tamil political formations in Colombo about the unnecessary delays at these transit camps and the inconveniences the people are put to, seems to have made some impression on the authorities. For some kind of streamline process is now on line. According to government officials a scheme has been drawn up to give priority to the ill, coming south for medical treatment, people going abroad for employment, public servants travelling in connection with their work, permanent residents returning to the south, and the many old people who are coming south for the first time to join their families.

The tragedy, says an official, is that people trying to flee to the south from the intolerable hardships that have been heaped on them through displacement are often put off by the callous treatment meted out to them at the transit camps. 'they are looking for relief but the delays and the inconveniences have even made some people return to the north' says an official overseeing one of these camps.

While 1000 people come into the south through the army checkpoints daily, sometimes just as many people cross the army lines into LTTE held territory.

Yogarani in her late 30s, and a mother of 4 who fled northern Jaffna in the wake of operation Riviresa has now relocated herself in Mankulam. She crossed over to Vavuniya for the day to buy cooking utensils for the new home she has built for herself and her 4 children after selling 4 sovereigns of gold. Her husband is a refugee in Switzerland.

Meenambal Arumugam was returning north after 3 months in Colombo where she had gone for eye surgery. Tears streaming down her face the middleaged widow anguishes over the fate of the 6 children she left behind in Jaffna. 'Where will I find them?' she wails as willing hands help her with her luggage. For people like Meenambal and Karthigesu, the end to their suffering is nowhere in sight.

Tamil Parties Add Demands

Fresh demands that keep surfacing from time to time from Tamil political parties for the resolution of the national question, could only harden moderate Sinhala opinion rather than contribute positively to the political debate, says a senior Tamil politician. He was reacting to the 3 new demands that 4 ex-militant groups have added to their initial 4-point formula for a negotiated political settlement.

The 4 Tamil groups are the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS).

And their new demands are that the government commits itself to a secular state, that the union of regions as envisaged under the devolution package be changed to a union of Regional states, and anybody resident in Sri Lanka for more than 10 years be granted citizenship.

Their 4-point formula was a unified politico-administrative entity for the northeast province; Substantial devolution of power to the unit; Institutional arrangements within the larger framework of the north eastern province for the Muslims ensuring their cultural identity and security, and provision made for the Sinhalese living in the northeast, to enjoy the same rights enjoyed by minorities living in the rest of the country.

Except for PLOTE, the other 3 groups have no representation in parliament having lost their seats in the last election.

The notable absentees in the Tamil grouping are Minister S. Thondaman, President of the Ceylon Workers Congress, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP).

Continued on page 14

NEWS REVIEW

Talks with Conditions ?: Even as preparations for the continuation of the offensive against the Tigers are being made, President Chandrika Kumaratunga in a recent speech did not rule out talks with the LTTE. However she spelt out three conditions for any such talks : complete cessation of hostilities, a symbolic laying down of weapons and a time-frame to be set for political discussions on a package for resolution of the conflict.

On the other hand, for his part the leader of the LTTE, Velupillai Pirabhakaran has also offered to resume talks with the government. His pre-conditions for such talks are that the army should withdraw from recently captured areas in Jaffna and such talks should be under the auspices of foreign mediation.

Any talks between the parties at the present time is a non-starter because of the pre-conditions set by both leaders, an analyst in Colombo said. The President's request for the LTTE to lay down arms will never be accepted by the LTTE. On the other hand, it must be noted that Tigers themselves rejected when the President offered such foreign mediation during the time both parties were talking before the breakdown of the peace process, the analyst said.

The War: In the northern front, in the past weeks there have been few military encounters between government forces and the LTTE although the military has been accused of shelling and bombing certain areas in the Vadamaradchi and Thenmararadchi in the Jaffna peninsula.

The army is said to be engaged in clearing operations and consolidating their positions in areas they gained control following operation Riviresa. However the troops engaged in this exercise are being compelled to confront the problem of thousands of mines and booby traps that litter the newly captured areas. "Mangoes ripen on the trees but no one dares go and pluck them" for fear of stepping on or touching mines and booby traps placed by the Tigers, an army spokesman is reported to have said. "They use everything possible, in every combination. Bombs have been disguised as cooking utensils or stuffed in toys, anything likely to attract attention and be touched," he said.

"The Tigers do a lot of improvisation. You trample a mine and suddenly the house behind which you are taking cover comes down and you're in the open. You open the door of one empty house, and suddenly you find ten houses in the vicinity come down reducing them to rubble. The Tigers use new techniques all the time. Some of their mines and IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) we've come across in the past are designed to explode even if you lift something or close a door or throw a switch. Once we came across a bomb designed to explode when someone entered the room. It was triggered by a very sensitive sound-sensing device," an army engineer is quoted as saying.

Even as government forces are attempting to consolidating their new gains, it is reported that the Tigers are regrouping themselves and engaged in a campaign of intensified recruitment among the tens of thousands of people displaced to the Vanni areas.

The editorial of "Eelanatham", the Tamil newspaper now published from Kilinochchi, recently said, "The LTTE has fought many great battles before and it has not been weakened or defeated. The victory which the government claims in Jaffna is not really a victory. The army has got its foot into Jaffna, but it will have to make a great effort to save that foot."

Some analysts regard the jungle infested areas of the Vanni where the Tigers are digging in are more favourable than the streets of Jaffna to the mode of hit-and-run guerilla warfare for which they are noted. Retired army chief Major General Dennis Perera told newspapers in Colombo, "The loss of Jaffna town is a great psychological blow to the Tigers. They can go on for some time in the jungle so long as they have supply lines. For them to operate from jungle bases would be more to their liking. Detection in the jungle would not be that easy."

In the east, all reports indicate that there has been an increase in the number of attacks by the LTTE upon the army and government installations. For instance, on 18 December the Tigers attacked and destroyed electricity power lines in the east putting several areas into darkness and without electricity. On 23 December Tigers ambushed a route-clearing patrol of the military at Shanthiveli in the Batticaloa district killing 33 soldiers and wounding 30 others suffering many casualties themselves. The army's claim that 60 LTTE men were killed in the encounter is described as exaggerated. On 2 January, a group of Tigers got away with seven truck-loads of food, including wheat flour, lentils, coconuts and sugar. At Santhiveli in the Batticaloa area, they stopped at gunpoint a convoy of lorries carrying foodstuff, forced the drivers to load the food items into tractors on which they escaped taking the truck batteries with them. On 3 January a large contingent of women cadres of LTTE attacked an airforce outpost at Pankulam, west of the eastern port city of Trincomalee in which one airman was killed and 12 others were wounded. The LTTE in a statement said that 4 airforce personnel were killed and more than 10 were injured in the attack and two buildings were destroyed. The Tigers also carried away significant quantities of weapons including several submachine guns, mortars and over 20,000 rounds of ammunition. In another ambush on an army patrol on 5 January at Meeyankulam junction in Batticaloa, the LTTE killed 8 soldiers and wounded 7 others.

As Tiger attacks kept increasing in the east, counter-insurgency operations by the security forces have been intensified. Disruption of movement of transport and traffic into and out of the Batticaloa town and cordon and house-to-house search operations in the area have become frequent. There have been reports of many persons being taken into custody and being held in unacknowledged detention and even of 'disappearances'.

A military spokesman stated that the security forces were planning major offensives in the east to destroy LTTE positions which have been set up following the pull-out of large number of troops to augment the Jaffna offensive. "Our army intelligence indicates that more than 1000 Tigers have come from the north to jangle bases in Vakarai in the east. The LTTE is planning to destabilise the east, especially Batticaloa, in a major way," he said.

Plight of Refugees: The U.N. refugee agency, UNHCR, said on 19 December that it would be delivering aid to 250,000 people who had been evacuated from Jaffna to the Vanni region. "We'll have up to four convoys a week of up to 10 eight-ton trucks, They'll be carrying kitchen equipment, clothes and blankets. For the next two months, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take the job of transporting all non-food relief items to the Vanni region, where most of the displaced have fled," a spokesman for the agency said. There was enough food for locals and refugees, although clean water and medicine were hard to come by, the spokesman added.

The European Union has granted about 200 million US dollars in aid to Sri Lanka for assistance to be provided to the displaced people. The aid provided through the EU Humanitarian Office is to help meet the needs for basic items such as food, shelter, plastic sheeting, water tanks, medicine and medical supplies for the civilians affected by the war.

The displaced people, both in the Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi areas and the Vanni are reported to be undergoing tremendous hardship as a result of an acute shortage of liquid cash in all the government and private banks which have been operating in the Jaffna district many of which are now relocated in the Vanni mainland. People with accounts in these banks are unable to withdraw any money and without any money they are unable to buy even food items for their daily sur-

vival. The main reason for this shortage of cash is that the relocated branches of the banks have not been supplied with cash from their Colombo head offices. Meanwhile, money lenders are reportedly making a killing by charging up to 40 per cent commission to cash cheques. Reportedly the Joint Operations Command of the Sri Lankan Army has put a stop to the transfer of money from Colombo to the relocated banks as they operate in Tiger-controlled areas.

In the meantime, it was reported that the government had decided to stop all payment of salaries to state employees and pensions to retired employees who have left Jaffna and are presently living in LTTE-controlled areas. If the displaced employees and pensioners returned to Jaffna, then they would be paid, according to an official. This move reflected the government's determination to get the displaced people to return to their homes in Jaffna, he said. The government appeared to be eager to win the hearts and minds of the Tamils and wants the displaced families to return to Jaffna where a major rebuilding operation is under way. Masons, carpenters, cement and roofing tiles and materials have been shipped to the peninsula. The government is accusing the LTTE of preventing the displaced people from returning to their homes.

Some Tamil politicians have protested against the government's decision to withhold payments to the displaced state employees and pensioners. "The government cannot hold back payments. The people have been displaced through no fault of their own," Joseph Pararajasingham, Member of Parliament for Batticaloa belonging to the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front said. "We are holding the 347 million rupees (Us $ 8 million) that should have been paid on 19 December until further instructions," an official in Colombo said. However, on 27 December, the government directed that Government Agents in the north to pay the December salaaries of all sssstaaate employees. Under the directive state employees and pensioners in the Jaffna peninsula, including those who had been displaced as a result of operaation Riviresa would be paid their dues by cheque from the Government Agent's office presently functioning in Chavakachcheri.

There have been reports of pressure upon the LTTE leaders from many displaced people now forced to live in the Vanni to travel either to Vavuniya or further south to Colombo. Without travel permits issued by the Tigers, no one can move and there have been severe restriction on the issue of such permits particularly for those between the ages of 12 and 40. However from 21 December, the LTTE relaxed some restrictions and began issuing travel passes charging Rs.1000 from those who leave the Vanni for trading purposes and Rs.200 from those travelling to seek medical treatment.

In spite of the tremendous hardship to which they are subjected, there are literally thousands of Tamils waiting in government controlled Vavuniya to travel southbound.

The displaced Tamil people from Jaffna would be able to return by April 1996, the Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte claimed. "We will create the necessary conditions and atmosphere for that by destroying the terrorists and their leader shortly," a report in a Colombo newspaper said reflecting his hardline view that the war against the Tigers would continue unabated.

The LTTE in a statement dated 15 January issued from its London office stated that the Sri Lankan government plans to transfer doctors and medical staff out of LTTE controlled Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi. There is an acute shortage of doctors in the hospitals of Vadamaratchi and Thenmaratchi to treat the patients who arrive in the hospitals in their hundreds to get treatment for injuries caused by Sri Lankan military shell attacks and air force plane bombs. There are also hundreds of other Tamils attending these hospitals for treatments for other illnesses. The Sri Lankan government is attempting to cause more suffering to all these patients by making plans to transfer even the little remaining doctors and medical staff out from the hospitals in Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi to other areas in Sri Lanka. The government has also purposely imposed a delay in supplying medicines and medical equipments to these hospitals. The hospitals are by design under supplied with medicines. The government has also completely stopped supplying certain urgently needed essential drugs to these hospitals for the last few months. These drastic measures taken by the Sri Lankan government on the hospitals in the North, is seen by many political observers as an attempt by the Government to aggravate the sufferings on the Tamil people living in LTTE controlled areas, in the hope,the people may turn against the LTTE.

Civilians as Human Shield : The University Teachers for Human Rights(Jaffna) has accused the Special Task Force(STF) operating in eastern Sri Lanka of using civilians as human shields during a battle with the Tigers.

On 5 December a large contingent of LTTE cadres mounted an attack on the STF base in the Batticaloa area which left 29 commandos dead. The Tigers admitted losing 28 of their men.

The UTHR(J), based on eye witness accounts, has accused the STF of forcing more than 100 civilians to remain aboard public buses, vans and cars they commandeered to rush reinforcements to the camp under seige by the Tigers. The police commandos crouched in the aisle of a bus during the attack, firing their guns at the attacking Tigers while the civilians were inside. At least 30 civilians were killed in the encounter. "The majority of the civilians who were killed died because they were used as human shields," the UTHR(J) report said.

Arms Influx : Fighter jets, helicopter gunships and gunboats have begun pouring into Sri Lanka as the country's armed forces prepare for fresh offensives against the Tamil Tigers, military officials and analysts, according to a Reuter report from Colombo datelined 12 January.

The military, which received a massive additional injection of funds this year, is also going for high-technology equipment such as remote-controlled aircraft for battlefield surveillance and laser target designators, they said.

"We're nowhere near the end of the war, probably at the beginning of Eelam War 4," said defence analyst Air Marshal Harry Goonetileke, a former air force chief. He was referring to an apparent new, high-intensity phase in the 12-year war between Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government forces.

The rebels raised the technological intensity of the war last April when they used missiles to shoot down two air force Avro transport planes after withdrawing from peace talks and unilaterally resuming hostilities. Previous phases of the war were marked by similar escalations in the intensity of fighting after unsuccessful ceasefires.

This month the air force acquired three Kfir fighters from Israel. Three more are on the way as are more Mi-17 transport and Mi-24 Hind attack helicopters from the former Soviet Union. China, Sri Lanka's main arms supplier, has delivered an anti-submarine vessel to meet the threat from underwater suicide bombers, along with a landing craft and two gunboats, navy officials said.

The transport problem for the forces is so acute that the air force has hired five An-24 transport planes flown by Kazakh pilots from a private airline to maintain the air bridge to Jaffna. The air force has lost half its fleet of big transport planes in rebel attacks and accidents since last April as the Tigers stepped up attacks on military supply lines. The rebels' formidable Sea Tiger naval wing has also seriously weakened the navy, sinking two supply ships, two Shanghai-class gunboats and two Israeli-built Dvora attack craft. The navy has replaced its losses and ordered more Dvoras from Israel and gunboats from China.

Deputy Finance and Justice Minister G.L.Peiris recently said that the Peiris has blamed the steep rise in defence spending, which will rise to 38 billion rupees in 1996 from 24 billion rupees originally estimated for 1995, on the intensified war effort.

Censorship Lifted: The censorship imposed on the publication of military re-

lated news was lifted on 19 December. Initially, the censorship, covering both local and foreign media was imposed on 21 September last year. However, following protests and fearing adverse international reaction, the government lifted the censorship on foreign correspondents operating from Colombo on 25 September, but retained its application to the local media which it accused of acting irresponsibly at a time when the troops were fighting the Tigers in the north.

However, the ban on the travel of both local and foreign correspondents to the war-torn north continues.

Privatisation of Tea Estates : Despite protests from several sectors, the Sri Lankan government has decided to go ahead with its programme for the privatisation of the country's tea and rubber plantations, according to official sources in Colombo.

The programme has come under fire from both trade unions and business community, though for different reasons. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, in a letter to the Ministry of Plantation Industries, has highlighted many flaws in the privatisation procedure, especially the lack of transparency.

The trade unions of the Ceylon Workers Congress and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, two partners in the Peoples Alliance government, have also objected to it and even threatened to stage a strike.

The Ceylon Workers Congress leader, Cabinet Minister S.Thonda- man, has said that they were not against the principle of privatisation but the salary structure for the workers under the programme.

The Public Enterprise Reform Commission which is in charge of implementing the programme has insisted that it would go ahead as proposed.

Electrode Test for Muralitharan : Sri Lanka have called up a Hong Kong based professor and his electrical wizardry to decide once and for all whether off- spinner Muttiah Murali- tharan throws or bowls.

Former Sri Lankan umpire Ajith Perera said that electrodes will be attached to the bowler's elbow to transmit three -dimensional pictures of the arm angle during delivery. "Then we can resolve the matter scientifically," said Perera, who lobbied to clear Sri Lanka's name on a charge of ball tampering during the first test against Australia in Perth.

Dr Ravi Goonetilleke, a Sri Lankan professor based in HongKong, would be able to download the pictures into a portable computer and state categorically whether there is any straightening of the arm at the moment of release, which is illegal in cricket. But some cricket board officials have said the medical test is redundant. They claim that although Australian umpire Darrell Hair no-balled Muralitharan seven times during the second Test at Melbourne, it showed that he does not throw every ball, if he throws at all.

Four days after being no-balled for throwing for the second time in a match on tour, the 23-year-old Muralitharan was omitted for the World Series one-day game against Australia at Melbourne on Tuesday. What compounded the issue was that he was called for chucking after switching to bowling leg breaks. It is considered physically impossible to throw a leg break.

The ICC, cricket's ruling body, have urged Muralitharan to change his action and Sri Lankan Board of Control president Ana Punchihewa has requested a final ruling from the ICC on the legitimacy or otherwise on Muralitharan's action ahead of next month's World Cup in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Boycotting 'Parasites':

The World Tamil Resurgence Organisation (Ulahath Thamilar Eluchchik Kalaham) operating from Toronto in Canada has in a leaflet made a call to Tamils in Canada: "Let us the people of Tamil Eelam resident awake ! Let us recognise and identify the parasites in our race !".

In its preamble the leaflet states that the "activities of some in Canada are helping the Sinhala government directly or indirectly. Some of the deeds we do for income benefit the Sinhala racist government and the Indian government which provides indirect support to the former. The things that some do for their existence and businesses provide income to Sri Lanka and India. The things that some do for their survival provide money to our enemies. The money which should go to the sacred movement goes to other hands and to selfish gangs of traders because of these parasites."

The leaflet sets out the duty at this stage of the Tamil liberation struggle as follows:

* Indian newspapers and magazines should not be imported or sold by any Tamil shop nor should they be read by the Tamils;

* Indian films should not be screened in Tamil cinema and videos be sold or rented by any shop-keeper. Indian audio video tapes and CDs should not be sold. No programmes should be organised featuring Indian artistes.

* Tamil and English newspapers and magazines from Colombo including Virakesari, Thinamurasu and Sunday Times, should not be imported or sold by Tamil business outlets.

* Tamil film songs should not be broadcast over Tamil community radio stations operating in Canada. Only liberation songs should be broadcast. Only the news bulletins of the Liberation Tigers should be broadcast as news.

* All the Tamil journals in Canada which give wrong information about the situation in our motherland should change their ways. Only items in Ulhath Thamilar (World Tamils) Kalaththil (In the Battlefield), Eelamurasu (The Drums of Eelam), Eelanatham (The Song of Eelam), Viduthalaippuli (Liberation Tiger) and news bulletins released by the Liberation Tigers should be published. Any newspaper that does not follow this code should not be sold here.

* The Tamil Rehabilitation Organi sation(TRO) which assists our people who are undergoing suffering as refugees has now started a food catering service in Canada. In order to support this noble venture, the local Tamil catering entrepreneurs should temporarily suspend their trade.

* Products from the Marketing Department and the private sector in Sri Lanka such as maliban biscuits, pickets and tinned fish should not be imported or sold in Tamil trade outlets here.

* Tamil travel agents should not sell tickets for Air Lanka.

* In order to assist Tamil Liberation, all Tamil business organisations here should buy and sell only Palmar canned foods, vegetables and sea-food imported and distributed by Kaan Imports who support the movement. Such products should not be purchased from other organisations.

* In order to prevent the fattening of selfish traders, low-price people's shops that support national liberation should be opened.

* This is the compulsion of time borne by crisis. All should come forward to carry it out as the command of time. This is not a banning order. It is a kind plea. It will not be long before the people understand the deceitful survivalism of those who ignore this plea and boycott them.

Knowledgeable sources in Toronto confirm that this call has been made by people associated with the World Tamil Movement which is associated with the LTTE which publish a Tamil weekly titled "Ulahath Thamilar" the views of which are almost entirely pro-LTTE.

To begin with, the primary target of this exercise would appear to be the popular Tamil weekly in Canada, "MANJARI" edited by D.B.S.Jayaraj who is a reputed journalist both in English and Tamil and English. He and his wife have reportedly been subjected to threats, intimidation and filthy abuse over the telephone. It may be recalled that he has a victim of previous physical attacks too. Since the publication and wide distribution of this leaflet, many shops in Canada would appear to have stopped selling MANJARI and many Tamil business advertisers to the journal have dropped out. Nevertheless, the weekly has published the leaflet in full while also publishing an advertisement from the Canadian police announcing that it is an offence under their law to prevent or obstruct any lawful business activity of selling or buying.

LTTE Leader Seeks Support From Tamil Nadu People

Velupillai Pirabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has, in a statement dated 28 December '95 addressed to the political leaders and people of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, said that 'Tamil Nadu should continue to voice for our plight and express support to our legitimate causes'.

The following are excerpts from the LTTE leader's statement:

'On behalf of our people, I wish to express my affection and gratitude to the people and leaders of Tamil Nadu for voicing passionately for the Tamils of Eelam who are struggling for their liberation against the genocidal oppression of the Sinhala regime.

'The waves of sympathy that sweep across Tamil Nadu whenever the Eelam Tamils are repressed has always been a deterrent to our ruthless enemy and a great source of hope and relief to our aggrieved people. It also impresses upon the world that the Eelam Tamils are not alone without support. Even though several forces have been making deliberate efforts to pollute the minds of the Tamils of Tamil Nadu with ill-conceived notions about our national struggle and about the Liberation Tigers who lead that struggle, we are encouraged and emboldened to note that there is growing upsurgence in Tamil Nadu demanding justice for our people on the basis of ethnic affinity and humanism.

'For a long time even before the birth of the LTTE, the Tamil Nation has been bleeding. For a long time, our nation has been facing genocide. In this lengthy history, extending over four decades, our language, our culture, our education, our economic existence – all the essential elements that form the very basis of our national life – have been subjected to systematic destruction. The monster of Sinhala racism has been usurping our motherland. The Sinhala armed forces have occupied our historical cities and towns. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to vacate their own lands and reduced to destitution. In this tragic history tainted with blood, forty thousand Tamils have been exterminated. The current war is a continuation and monstrous expansion of this cruel genocidal history'.

'. . . The Sinhala state has been making desperate efforts to characterise the mode of armed resistance based on the struggle of self-determination as a form of 'terrorism' and 'Separatism'. These ill-conceived notions are being propagated among the Indian people and among the international community. This malicious propaganda is aimed at distorting the truth and discrediting the mode of our struggle. We are neither 'Terrorists' nor 'Separatists', or propagators of 'Armed Culture'. We are fighting for a noble cause. We are fighting to protect our people from racial annihilation. We are compelled to take up arms against the armed violence which has taken a genocidal form. We are faced with a complex conflictual historical situation in which we have to struggle with our lives for the right to live. We fervently hope that the people of Tamil Nadu and India will understand our critical situation'.

'. . . The hope and expectation of our people that the Sinhala nation might offer an alternative to the demand of an Independent state are now shattered. The Sinhala nation is not prepared to recognise the historically constituted traditional lands in which the Tamils lived for centuries as the homeland of the Tamils. It is for the resolution of this crucial issue that the Tamils have been cheated for a long time. Tamil political history is full of incidents of abrogation of pacts and agreements on this basic issue.

'Chandrika government has scored a historical achievement in the task of destroying the geographical unity and integrity of the Tamil homeland and disrupting the national life of the Tamils. Having cheated the world with the slogans of 'War for Peace' and 'Liberating the Tamils', her regime has occupied our historical homeland. The central theme of her proposed package is aimed at re-defining the geographical structure of the Tamil homeland.

'From the time of Bandaranaike to Chandrika's period, successive Sinhala racist states have adopted repressive military policies instead of peaceful approach to resolve the conflict. Chandrika's approach is unique. Misguiding the world under the slogan of peace, she has ingeniously planned and is executing a genocidal strategy against the Tamils.

'Our talks with Chandrika have ended in fiasco. Chandrika regime refused to create conditions of peace and normalcy by relaxing military and economic pressure on the Tamils. Her government was reluctant to enter into a permanent cease-fire with international supervision. Instead, under the guise of a fragile cessation of hostilities, the government has been strengthening its military machine. It refused to open up a land route to the people by relaxing the siege of Jaffna. It gave primacy to the hegemonic interests of the military rather than to create an environment of peace.

'The government did not give any importance to the peace talks with the LTTE. It delegated bureaucrats to the peace negotiations. High ranking political leaders did not participate. The government did not reveal its package of proposals during the peace talks with the LTTE.

'Chandrika government failed to take seriously our proposition that we were prepared to consider a political framework that recognises the Tamil homeland with full form of autonomy to the Tamils. We expressed our goodwill by releasing prisoners of war. Yet, Chandrika government was not prepared even to settle the minor day to day problems of our people. We felt that the government was not sincerely interested in resolving the ethnic conflict by negotiating with the LTTE. We were also convinced that Chandrika regime was not prepared to offer any substantial political framework that would satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamils. Under these circumstances, when the talks prolonged meaninglessly we issued deadlines. But the government did not take our warnings seriously. The talks collapsed. Having created conditions for the breakdown of talks the government blamed the LTTE. It carried out a false propaganda campaign internationally that the LTTE was against the peace approach. In truth, it was Chandrika's government which was opposed to peace.

'Claiming that the Tamil people are the citizens of the country, Chandrika's regime has embarked on a massive military onslaught on the Tamils. Having assembled a formidable force in a single battle front, it has occupied the historic city of Jaffna and has raised the Sinhalese national flag over our soil. The Sinhala nation is celebrating this tragic event soaked by the tears of five hundred thousand displaced Tamils. Celebrations are taking place in Colombo as if the Tamil nation was defeated at war. We do not believe that the Sinhalese chauvinists who have deeply hurt the national sentiments of the Tamils in such a manner would offer justice to the Tamils.

Continued on page 9

On Progressing to Peace Through War

by S. Sivasegaram, London

The electoral success of the People's Alliance and the resounding victory of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at the presidential election on the basis of her promise to find a peaceful solution to this problem which has dogged the country for decades gave hope to the nationalities of Sri Lanka who wanted peace. No leader of the Sinhala nationality had in recent decades received support comparable with that received by CBK at the presidential election from the minority nationalities. So the expectations were high as far as the Thamils were concerned. There were other expectations too about the restoration of democracy and trade union rights, dismantling the dictatorial presidential system, and reviving an anti-imperialist agenda. The actions of the PA government since CBK took power were disappointing to those who expected it to undo the damage inflicted by the UNP on Sri Lanka. But many were forgiving and argued that CBK was the victim of circumstances and that, even if she was not serious or sincere about anything else, she was earnest about finding a just and peaceful solution to the national question and therefore deserved all the support that one could give her. There were some who did not fail to express their fears. Arguments about the events of the past several months seem to have come mainly from two opposing camps, one putting its faith in CBK's good intentions and the other in the ability of the LTTE to force the government to agree to a negotiated settlement.

One major weakness of both camps appears to be the faith in the ability of a single individual to bring about a solution. As a result, those who have put their faith in CBK, refuse to take into account the reality of Sinhala chauvinism and the class interests that she represents. They seem to assume that the forces that stood in the way of her implementing her other important pledges will somehow let her find a just and peaceful solution to the ethnic question, and some of them are, by choice, oblivious to the plight of the vast majority of Thamil people now living in Colombo and to the cynical attitude of the government and its armed forces towards the NGOs and their appeal for support to the refugees of the war to capture Yaalppaanam. I do not expect them to protest at the government's decision not to pay the pensions to those inside LTTE-controlled territory. Human rights are, after all, highly political and their violation, like beauty, is in the eye of the one that perceives it. The LTTE also has for its share those who cannot imagine the LTTE and its leader V. Pirabaakaran ever making a mistake. If anything goes wrong, they always have someone else to blame. The lack of a critical approach among the supporters of the LTTE, especially those living abroad, has hurt the Thamil liberation struggle much more than attacks by those hostile to the LTTE.

The purpose of this article is to remind ourselves of some important bits of the history of national oppression against the Thamil people and the struggle for liberation. Much blame is laid at the doorstep of the LTTE for its reluctance to trust CBK's intentions. If CBK's integrity is sufficient guarantee of her ability to deliver the peace package, then it makes one wonder whether SWRD Bandaranaike and Dudley Senananayake went back on their pledges because their integrity was any less than that of CBK. Nothing could be further from the truth. CBK faces the same kind of resistance to any reasonable solution to the ethnic question that SWRDB and Dudley S faced, but of a more vicious character. There is also a powerful military machine which has been trained to see the Thamil nation as its enemy and a police force which sees a Tiger in every Thamil seen in Colombo. The kind of anti-Thamil sentiment whipped up under the Dharmishta era of J.R. Jayawardene is again raising its head after a brief setback some months ago. What is in question is not CBK's intention or integrity but her ability to deliver the goods.

Some of the defenders of the government's latest march towards peace do not hesitate to label those who fail to criticise the LTTE for its distrust of the PA government and, more importantly, of CBK as Thamil nationalists or LTTE supporters. R. Hoole in a recent communication to *Counterpoint* (September 1995) even went to the extent of accusing the *Viirakeisari* and *Sarinihar* (a Thamil fortnightly published by the MIRJE) of taking a pro-LTTE stance. Such sentiments do not fail to show up, perhaps not surprisingly, in the statements of the so-called UTHR(J) which seems to be well informed about even the smallest violation of human rights by the LTTE but rather ignorant about what the Thamils in Colombo are facing. Ram Manikkalingam in his communications to the *Frontline* (a fortnightly belonging to *the Hindu*

Continued on page 10

● **continued from page 8**

'The Tamil nation, which has been conducting a heroic freedom struggle for such a long time, will not be frustrated by a setback in a single battle. Our people are fiercely determined though they have faced the enormous suffering arising from death, destruction, displacement and destitution. We are united and determined by the passion for freedom. We are confident that the setbacks of today will turn out to be the victories of tomorrow. We are firmly convinced that our land which bleeds today will become a free land one day.

'Though our enemy has been adopting devious methods to alienate us from the outside world, from the world Tamil community and from Tamil Nadu where our deep roots are embedded, the support and sympathy generating from Tamil Nadu have given us moral inspiration and determination.

'We are deeply saddened to note a recent incident in Trichi where a youth has taken his life by self-immolation as an extreme form of expression of solidarity. While we pay our respects to his passion for freedom and his sentiments of ethnic love we feel that such acts of self-sacrifice are unnecessary and therefore have to be avoided.

'The Sinhala racist state is firmly determined to continue to carry out the genocidal war in Tamil Eelam. In these circumstances, Tamil Nadu should continue to voice for our plight and express support to our legitimate cause. This is what the people of Tamil Eelam fervently expect from the people of Tamil Nadu.'

Yours sincerely,
(V. Pirabakaran),
Leader,
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Continued from page 9

newspaper establishment of Madras and noted for its hostility towards the LTTE and its remarkable sympathy for the late Gamini Dissanayake, despite its facade of sympathy towards Marxism) in December '95, of which one has been reproduced in the *Tamil Times* (December '95), talks of 'Tiger intransigence' and places his hopes on CBK's ability to 'juggle the military and the peaceniks'. *Raavaya*, a Sinhala journal well known for its defence of the rights of the Thamil people in the past, has reportedly commented that the conquest of Yaalppaanam was a good thing. CBK herself has expressed surprise why any Thamil should feel unhappy about the army conquering Yaalppaanam, since it was part of Sri Lanka. After all, it was an event to be celebrated quietly without hurting Thamils, physically.

There are some who argue that CBK is the last chance for peace and blame the LTTE for all what has gone wrong with what they saw as the peace process. They also go along with the government in portraying the LTTE as the ultimate evil, opposed to democracy and human rights. It is also convenient for them to portray the LTTE and the Sinhala Buddhist extremists as the two opposite poles so that the PA government appears as the fair median. They ignore the history of the Thamil national question and see the LTTE in isolation from the events of the past decades and, more importantly, ignore the fact that it is not the bark of the Sinhala Buddhist extremists that the Thamil people had to confront so far but the bite of the armed forces of a government which represents only the Sinhala nation.

Sinhala chauvinism has never been in the interests of the Sinhala masses and has been used for opportunistic reasons by the Sinhala elite to further their class interests. It is also remarkable that the spokespersons for Thamil nationalism in its embryonic stages were members of the Thamil elite class who could hardly communicate properly in Thamil and were more concerned about the status of English in Sri Lanka than that of their own language. It was a sequence of events including the break-up of the Ceylon National Congress, the citizenship act, the language bill, standardisation, the string of amendments to the constitution of the country and, of course, the anti-Thamil violence of '58, '77 and '83 which led to the emergence of Thamil nationalism and, not an isolated incident or two. Despite my own desire for a united Sri Lanka, I cannot foresee a situation in the near future in which the Thamil people will feel that they belong to the same nation as the Sinhalese. The only lasting unity of Sri Lanka seems to be that of two or more nations entering voluntarily into a union on the basis of equality. Self-determination is an inevitable precondition for such a unity to last, and for some mysterious reason, the advocates of the PA peace package (which has yet to be unwrapped although it is already Xmas '95) seem to shy away from that notion and some even going to the extent of signing joint declarations to denounce it as an obsolete notion (see the plea 'For a new social contract' by a group of intellectuals, reproduced in *TT* July '95). If anyone is responsible for the emergence of Thamil nationalism, it is those who denied equality to the Thamil people and not only refused to recognise their traditional homeland but also systematically tried to alter its ethnic composition and territorial contiguity.

The LTTE is, not altogether wrongly, accused of being undemocratic and guilty of violating human rights by its various opponents. It will be useful for us to remember the records of the governments of Sri Lanka when it came to dealing with threats to their existence in 1971 and the 1980s. The LTTE, like the JVP in the 80s, was responding to oppression in the way it could. LTTE's rivals, many of whom depend on handouts from the Colombo government, have had poor records of the democracy and human rights in the past, and we have, hopefully, not forgotten the infamous days of Indian 'peace keeping'. I have had first hand experience of intolerance to criticism from a leader of the EPRLF during an informal discussion in London in 1990. What is true is that the leading Thamil liberation groups never had a structure conducive to democracy and a part of this deficiency was inherited from the TULF (and the Federal Party). The mischief of Indira Gandhi's government and subsequently that of Rajiv Gandhi's in pitting one movement against the other so that it could use them to further its ends in South Asian power politics is also responsible for rivalries deepening into bitter hostility. In this context, it was hardly surprising that many leaders became tools in the hands of the governments of India or Sri Lanka and most of the leading liberation movements became party to the genocidal wars against the Thamil people. What was unfortunate about the conflict between movements was that not only key figures in rival movements were seen as the enemy but even cadres at the lowest level who could have been won over. To single out the LTTE for criticism is to cover up the misdeeds of its rivals and the cynicism of successive governments of Sri Lanka. It should also be noted here that intimidation was not something that the TULF and FP always condemned. Academics who appealed to the Thamil people to vote for V. Ponnambalam who contested S.J.V. Chelvanayakam at KKS in 1974 were sent threatening letters, and the response of the TULF to the killing of Alfred Duraiappa was, at best, muted. In fact, I remember reading in the memoirs of A. Amirthalingam his expresion of anger at the killing of his colleagues Aalaalasuntharam and Tharmalingam by militants while sparing the lives of certain invididuals whom he considered to be traitors.

Those who attack the LTTE for breaking the truce on 19.04.95 fail to criticise the PA government for the flippant way in which it approached the peace process. The failure of the government to include a senior figure in any one of its four delegations to the north was hardly convincing in the context of a history of torn-up pacts and broken promises. The PA government appeared to be more interested in public relations exercises than in taking concrete steps towards a just solution. The wisdom of the LTTE in bringing the cease-fire to an end can be a subject of endless debate, but equally disputable is the wisdom of CBK in making very unstatesmanly utterances in India during her subsequent visit to India. One may also be reminded here of the FP's folly of its 'anti-Sri' campaign of 1958 which not only strengthened the hands of the opponents of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact but also provided an excuse for the Sinhala chauvinists to unleash violence against the Thamil people in the same year. One can blame the FP for their lack of wisdom, but that is not a valid defence of the abrogation of the B-C pact or the violence of 1958.

Continued on page 29

Change in International Perception – Illusion of External Intervention

by Dr. S. Narapalasingham

On behalf of the Tamils affected by the civil war in North-East Sri Lanka, a few Tamil notables have appealed directly to the Secretary General of the United Nations hoping that he will be able to cause some external intervention to help the suffering people. The telegram sent to him by the DK leader in Tamil Nadu sought his intervention to stop the 'army atrocities'. Besides, the expatriate Lankan Tamils in the USA and Canada staged a massive demonstration in New York, where the UN headquarters is located. Similar demonstrations were also held in London and other cities. The main message that was conveyed through these demonstrations was that the Tamils were the helpless victims of brutal aggression by Sri Lanka's military. These made headline news in the various Tamil tabloids and also raised emotions among the fellow Tamils. The foreign print and electronic media by and large ignored these protests. On the contrary, the opinions expressed through the editorials were to say the least unsympathetic to the LTTE for the 'terrorism' unleashed since April '95 aimed at achieving its declared goal of an independent sovereign state in Sri Lanka's North-East region. The LTTE supporters and sympathisers in Western countries have been announcing through slogans, letters to newspapers and other means that this organization is the sole representative of the Tamils. The implication of this posture to the present change in the attitude of foreign governments to the Tamil problem will become evident in the ensuing discussion.

International Response

The following excerpt from the editorial of Britain's *Daily Telegraph* published the day after the raising of the Sri Lankan flag over Jaffna gives an illustration of what the outside world expects the LTTE to do viz. return to the negotiating table:

'Having tried the carrot of peace talks on devolution, from which the Tigers walked out in April, President Kumaratunga has now wielded the stick of a successful attack on the stronghold of a singularly vicious movement. The killing of more than 100 people at Colombo's main bus station in 1987, and the assassinations of Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian prime minister and Ranasinghe Premadasa, the Sri Lankan president in 1991 and 1993 respectively, are some of the milestones along its murderous path. . . . . .President Kumaratunga will have to maintain military pressure until the Tigers are persuaded to return to the negotiating table, while at the same time restraining the majority Sinhalese from turning on the Tamil population. In maintaining this difficult balance, she deserves the support of all governments which recognise terrorism as a scourge of the modern world.'

In 1987 when the Sri Lankan army captured Vadamaratchi, the uproar it created in Tamil Nadu resulting in the Indian Government's intervention that prevented further military advances into Jaffna must be compared with the somewhat restricted response seen from the 12-hour general strike organized on November 30 by the DMK (not the ruling party in Tamil Nadu) leader Karunanithi. Significantly, there were no slogans hailing the LTTE or its leader as well as calling for a separate Tamil Eelam. The dramatic change in the attitude of the Indians including the Tamils there to the LTTE after the assassination of Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandh still continues to haunt all Lankan Tamils regardless of their status there as either refugees or mere visitors. LTTE continues to deny responsibility for the assassination but what matters here is the perception of the world even though the verdict of the court has yet to be pronounced. In such instances, the judicial system that operates in some countries based on the premise that the suspect is guilty until proven innocent is applicable.

Militarism and Coercive Methods

The late Tamil leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam worked hard to forge unity between the Tamils and Muslims in the North-East. The way the Muslims were treated by the LTTE in the North and in the Est resulting in the forced evacuation from Jaffna and the massacre of some in the eastern province undid all the work done to unite the Tamil-speaking people. The LTTE spokesman has apologised for their mistake with regard to the forced evacuation of Muslims from Jaffna, but whatever trust that existed before between the Tamils and Muslims cannot be that easily restored in this simple way. The reduction in the size of the minority Tamil community caused by the elimination of Tamils considered 'traitors' and those disobeying their orders as well as the large number already left the North-East appears to be of no concern, in the belief that the fighting power alone is sufficient to achieve the political goal. It is relevant to mention that to many foreigners the size of the Tamil population in the North-East is crucial to justify the demand for an autonomous Tamil state.

The LTTE's fighting strength proven earlier on several occasions, has in its wake given rise to overconfidence and disregard for international opinion. This attitude also got reinforced after the Indian army withdrew in 1990 and other Tamil groups were either eliminated by force or marginalised through various intimidatory acts. The perception among the Tamils that the LTTE was their true protector against the army 'atrocities' also enhanced its self-confidence. All SL governments by their acts of commission and omission that affected the daily lives of Tamil civilians have given credence to this perception. Its cadres are believed by the people to have valiantly sacrificed their lives solely for protecting and eventually liberating them from Sinhala domination. LTTE's recent actions, including the forcible evacuation of the civilians in Jaffna to the mainland under its control just before the Sri Lankan army entered the city must be seen in this light, for at all times and at any cost it cannot afford to allow this perception to change. The outcome of the present tug of war between the Government wanting the displaced people to return to their homes in Jaffna and the LTTE forcing them to stay put in the Vanni, where they are establishing the new base to continue the war against the 'occupying forces' will decide how long the Tamils in the North-East will suffer without even basic ameni-

Continued on page 13

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Continued from page 11

ties and how many more Tamils and Sinhalese will get killed and maimed. The two tools that have proved effective to the LTTE in keeping the Tamil people physically with them are coercion and propaganda. The latter has also proved effective to mobilise support among the expatriate Tamils but ineffective even to maintain the sympathy of the international community which the Tamils had earlier. The indifference of the LTTE to world opinion, particularly with regard to the manner the proclaimed 'liberation war' has been conducted, using school children as combatants and throwing away 'opportunities' for reaching a negotiated settlement of the conflict has led in turn to the present apathy of the international community to the plight of the Tamil people.

World opinion

The violation of human rights by the LTTE have been documented by Amnesty International and the Tamil Human rights group of university teachers and it is naive to assume that foreign governments are unaware of them. The massacre of Sinhalese civilians including women and children in border villages in the North-East region by the LTTE cadres, as a strategic move to weaken the army's attack on Jaffna received wide condemnation from all foreign governments including those that wield power in the UN Security Council. Some may still not want to admit the facts that have contributed to the present tragic plight of the Tamils, which has made them refugees in their home-region. But the governments of the powerful countries have the means to come to their own conclusions from the information gathered by them and from independent sources.

The factors that have contributed to the change in the attitude of foreign governments to the Tamil problem which has got linked with the actions of the LTTE, the organization proclaimed by many as the sole representative of the Tamil people include, in the main, rightly or wrongly their perception of the LTTE as 'a terrorist and anti-democratic group, having no respect for human rights and believing firmly in the use of force as the only means to achieve the political goal'.

No Tamil can deny that both democracy and non-violent methods of protests have failed to solve the Tamil problem. Nor can it be denied that the willingness of the Sri Lankan government to devolve powers extensively to the Tamil region is the result of the Tamil militancy. But it should not be forgotten that even medicines known to be effective in curing ailments taken in excess can be fatal.

The world, particularly after the events of August 1994 when the present government was elected on a clear mandate to solve the problem peacefully, regarded the moves of the SL Government as positive in finding a political solution to the ethnic conflict and the actions of the LTTE as obstructive to a negotiated settlement. Foreign news agencies when reporting on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, invariably, mention at the end of their reports that the underlying reason for the civil war is ***the discrimination of minority Tamils by the majority Sinhalese.*** Tamils in Sri Lanka are aware of the gap that exists between approved policies claimed to redress Tamil grievances and their deficiencies in implementation. For instance, Tamils still are obliged to fill in various Government forms printed only in the Sinhalese language. But most foreigners are unaware of these difficulties faced by the Tamil people and in any event these would not be considered as valid reasons for continuing the war. The devolution proposals put forward by the present Government, are seen from this perspective by the outside world as adequate to eliminate the root cause of the 'Tamil problem'.

President Kumaratunga's leadership has been praised by foreign governments, including the European Parliament. Thondaman, the experienced politician and leader of the Ceylon Workers Congress, who seems to understand LTTE's ideology and tactics, paid glowing tribute to her concern for the sensitivities of the Tamil community and dedication to safeguard the Tamils (*T.T.* Dec. '95, p11). Her government has given high priority to rehabilitate the battle-scarred Jaffna by repairing the main hospital and damaged roads and buildings and restoring the power supply. Her consistent stand even after the end of Operation Riviresa on December 5 to reach a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict has given credibility in the eyes of the world. She has urged the LTTE to return to the peace process, offering amnesty and safety to the cadres. Her peace and humanitarian efforts as seen by the international community have given a totally new complexion to her government's image abroad with the result that many governments are convinced of her sincerity and are willing to help in various ways.

Powers of the UN

It is necessary to clear the apparent misperception with regard to the powers of the UN Secretary General and the world body itself, particularly under the existing world order. This is important since some Tamils appear to be disappointed that the international community has now ignored their cry for help. In this regard, attention is drawn to the fundamental rule under which the UN (applicable to any other international body like the British Commonwealth) can operate. It cannot intervene in the internal affairs of its member states, unless a request is made by the concerned government (assuming that a recognized constitutional government exists) and this in turn has the approval of the Security Council. Here too not one of the five permanent members of the Council should object by exercising the veto power. The Secretary General can, however, make diplomatic efforts and persuade the parties in conflict to settle it peacefully. He may recommend to the Security Council a course of action which he thinks desirable to prevent a major human tragedy occurring in a country but it is the Council that decides whether to take action accordingly or otherwise or none at all. For instance, his recommendation to set up a preventive peace keeping force in order to avoid the repeat of the Rwandan tragedy occurring in Burundi, where about a million people are reported to have died in a month in the civil war between Tutsis and Hutus has been turned down so far by the Security Council. He has full authority in implementing the decisions of the Security Council and even here certain constraints can prevent the implementation. For example the Security Council resolution 242 which required Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied during the 1967 war with the Arabs was not implemented.

Even foreign international agencies such as UNHCR providing humanitarian aid can operate within a sovereign state only with the

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

consent of its constitutional government. The government of Rwanda on December 11 ordered 38 aid agencies to leave the country within a week. They could only appeal to the government to reconsider its decision. The refugee problem in Africa caused by civil wars in various countries is straining the available resources and the capacity of the aid agencies and the London-based Africa Rights Group has accused the international community of forgetting the crisis there. There are over 2 million Rwandan refugees alone sheltering in other African states. Donor fatigue sets in when the problem becomes permanent; a fact useful for Sri Lankans to bear in mind.

The resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly are not obligatory and merely convey the majority opinions of the international community. During the past few years, the UN Assembly has passed by overwhelming majority the resolution imploring the United States to lift the embargo on Cuba. But it still remains in effect. The UN organization wanted the people of Kashmir to determine their sovereign status through a plebiscite. This was never conducted. The point here is that while the UN serves as a forum to debate issues affecting or likely to affect adversely international relations, world peace, security of member states, stability of regions, economic conditions of regions etc., and raise awareness of the dangers of terrorism, drug trafficking etc., it is the powerful countries in the Security Council that can cause the UN to act decisively or to delegate other bodies like the NATO to act in order to achieve its agreed goals. In this regard, the role of the U.S. and her allies in the post cold war era cannot be overemphasised as borne out by the present arrangement to implement the Dayton peace agreement entered by all the warring groups in Bosnia.

The governments of donor countries with their economic power and diplomatic and military muscle, notably the United States, are in a position to influence world opinion and judge the conduct of aid recipient governments, like Sri Lanka, in terms of their actual observance of the principles governing democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, and the codes of conduct enshrined in internationally accepted conventions and in the UN charter. On all these criteria, the present government of Sri Lanka stands in the eyes of the international community as markedly civil than the previous governments, since the ethnic conflict turned into a bloody war. The psyche of the people that has evolved as a result of prolonged neglect, assaults, discrimination and feelings of insecurity under previous regimes is something that is not easy for foreigners to feel likewise. However, it is foolish to expect them to be prejudiced as some Tamils are and ignore the sincere efforts of a different government, which they believe will solve the long-standing problem amicably without sacrificing the long-term interests of all the concerned parties.

President Kumaratunga in an interview when asked about the possibility of external mediation to settle the conflict in Sri Lanka answered: 'At the moment foreign mediation is not on the cards. The international community has immense confidence to the peace initiative of the Government and our ability to carry it through'. (*T.T.* Dec. '95, p7). Unless the Sri Lankan Government is willing to invite some foreign government, agency or even dignitary to mediate, there is no point in even contemplating this possibility. It will not be pressurised by any foreign government or international or regional body to agree to external mediation. The reasons are obvious from the observations presented in this paper. Under the existing situation, the LTTE must also agree to external mediation. There is no point in having a dialogue with only one party. As long as the LTTE is able to maintain a hold on the Tamils in the North-East, the implementation of any peace plan that has not been formally accepted by its leadership will be sabotaged and lasting peace will remain as elusive as before. The main difficulty that is likely to continue to stand in the way of reaching a political settlement, short of an autonomous Tamil entity in the North-East in which LTTE can exercise absolute power, is the requirement for it to enter the democratic mainstream by giving up violence (and by implication the weapons) and rely on the support of the people given freely without intimidation and fear of reprisals.

What next?

This seems to be the question uppermost now in the minds of the Tamils. Borrowing President Kumaratunga's words, 'at the moment' only a miracle can free the Tamils in the North-East from the misery they have been driven into in the course of what has been believed as the struggle for liberation from Sinhala domination. One can only hope that the Tamil population at large recognize the importance of world opinon in conflict resolution and the continuation of the war in defiance of world opinion is to seek a life similar to that described by George Orwell in 'Animal Farm'. All over the world the trend is clear. Democratically elected governments that have the clout to influence events and the resolution of conflicts elsewhere detest authoritarianism and terrorism. They will support the governments committed to democracy and peace. There are no powerful authoritarian regimes now after the end of the cold war to frustrate this effort. Those who are conscious of this global ideal, which is likely to prevail in the next millennium will not even dream of direct intervention in Lanka's conflict by any responsible foreign government or international agency for the sole purpose of ensuring a particular group retains absolute power without the consent of the concerned people obtained through a free and fair election. To ignore this reality is to swim against a powerful current that is strong enough to carry even the most skilled swimmer into the sea. At the moment, the future for the Tamils seems bleak given the determination of the LTTE to capture absolute power in the North-East by continuing its violent method. Metaphorically, having clung on to the Tiger's tail for long, the people may be reluctant to release it for fear of being mauled. The longer the war continues the more difficult it will be for both parties to seek a political solution with or without external mediation. An intransigent attitude rejecting the option of a negotiated settlement of the conflict is suicidal for the entire Tamil community.

Continued from page 4

ALthough on occasion the TULF has joined hands with the ex-militants, more often than not it has distanced itself from them.

EPDP of course has its own agenda with its 9 seats in parliament and makes no bones about publicly denouncing the LTTE. Their sights are of course set on what they believe is the emergence of a new Tamil leadership in which they will play a crucial role.

THE EXODUS FROM JAFFNA - Part I

October/November 1995

The following is the text of the Special Report No.6 dated 6 December 1995 by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) :

"However,the greatest death and destruction, loss and grief, dislocation and relocation, are associated with the man made disasters that have occurred through warfare. The slaying of man by man in either direct combat or through sophisticated weaponry bring cruel mutilating injuries and sudden untimely violent deaths. Such deaths bring little opportunity for the healing process of physicians or the healing rituals of grief. And, of course, warfare destroys the house and habitants, the livelihoods and even lives of many non-combatants.....Mankind's capacity to create psychic trauma through war, to create horrifying forms of warfare, has increased exponentially."

- Prof. Raphael from Australia in "When Disaster Strikes."

Introduction

When the government forces launched their drive towards Jaffna at the beginning of October, the people were once more caught between the callousness of the Government and the LTTE to whom the civilians mattered little. The Government, while using the rhetoric of "liberating the Tamils from the clutches of the LTTE", had little tangible conception of the welfare of the Tamil people. It had supposedly air-dropped leaflets which never reached them, asking people to seek shelter in schools and places of worship. People were also advised to keep away from the LTTE. All this was too vague. By the seemingly random manner in which the government forces were bombing and shelling, these instructions made no practical sense to the people. At times even schools and places of worship were hit. Against the backdrop of heavy shelling and aerial bombing, most of the people decided not to take a risk and sought refuge mostly around Jaffna town. In their experience, there was nothing 'liberating' in the Government's actions.

On the other hand, the LTTE, apart from making the claim that it would fight to the last man to prevent Jaffna from falling, took no responsibility for the civilian population that it claimed to represent. An observation about recent LTTE practice is that they did not, unlike in the mid-80s, use their own cadre as sentries to monitor enemy movements. In the past these young sentries used to be the first casualties in any offensive action. Then several militant groups operated in competition. The posting of sentries in those days also served the public relations function of giving the civilians a picture that they were living behind a border under the protection of the militants. This early warning role in recent times has been played, instead, by civilians who were not conscious of their role. In the event of firing noises now, LTTE forces rushing into an area would ask civilians for information on enemy movements. Once the army had significantly expanded its perimeter in Jaffna and used mobile limited operations, it had become a war without borders in which the civilians had this new role.

Certain aspects of the LTTE's thinking had however begun to surface since the government forces' abortive military operation this July. Heavy shelling had caused the majority of the population to flee. But those who had remained behind found government troops far better behaved than in the previous phases of the war and LTTE propaganda had led them to expect. The troops had withdrawn by 19th July and word got around that army behaviour had been friendly or at least tolerable. This was evidently annoying to the LTTE. A number of those who had remained behind had been questioned or otherwise harassed by the LTTE allegedly under suspicion of being informers to the government forces.

The LTTE thought it had successfully moulded the people for six years and more to view them as liberators and be slavishly obedient to them. The notion that they could live under government control and manage their affairs struck at the roots of the LTTE's ideological edifice. This time, in October, the LTTE encouraged and even forced the civilians to vacate as the government troops advanced. Apart from the heavy bombing and shelling, also in the minds of the people was the Indian Army's advance in October 1987, exactly 8 years earlier. Many people had then remained behind in their areas. The LTTE then, as happened again in 1990, provoked the army from near places of civilian refuge and ran away. The worst incident of this kind at that time was in Jaffna Hospital.

The foregoing incident featured prominently in recent discussions among Jaffna Hospital doctors on the decisions they had to take concerning the hospital. Just about 4 members of the LTTE cadre had been in the hospital in 1987 when the Indian army column came near. Having thrown one grenade and fired shots which claimed several casualties, the four had run through the hospital and escaped. About 70 patients and medical staff died during the subsequent Indian army action. (Many civilians died from indiscriminate action by the Indian Army causing a total civilian death toll of 800 - 1500 for the entire operation of taking Jaffna in 1987.)

This time because the civilians had left Jaffna ahead of the advancing Sri Lankan army, the death toll for October was about 100, more than a half of it owing to aerial bombing well outside fighting zones. The comparatively low death toll owed very little to any initiative on the part of the Government. [The civilian death toll for November, to give rough estimates, would be about 30 from bombing and shelling and 300, very conservatively, from causes directly related to the forced exodus resulting in disease and debility. Most deaths taking place outside hospitals are unaccounted.]

On 26th October air force bombing claimed the lives of 10 refugees from Urumpirai camping at the edge of Jaffna's city limits in Ariyalai East. On the 28th began the decisive battle for Neervely, 6 miles up the Pt. Pedro Road from Jaffna. The battle was intense because, according to civilians, an LTTE counter-attack happened to have coincided with the army advance. Shelling by the army on the 29th morning fell at the edge of Jaffna's northern city limits. On that day about 42 civilians died because of aerial bombing in civilian areas outside town, far from the combat zone. A further 4 died because of shelling. Two shells fell in Gurunagar, inside city limits and facing the lagoon to the south. Although people were terrified by the noise, the city remained fairly safe.

In the first phase, by the 5th of October, the government forces had brought Puttur under control. The LTTE launched a counter-thrust similar to that of 14th July 1995 in Allaveddy. This time's counter offensive by the LTTE ended in catastrophe with the latter losing more than 150 seasoned cadre. From what emerged from top ranking LTTE leaders, they had accepted the likelihood of losing Jaffna. A decision had been taken that if the army persisted in its advance the LTTE would vacate and revert to guerilla warfare centred about the Vanni (Wanni) jungles. Yet for civilian consumption the rhetoric of fighting the 'final battle' and pushing the army out of Jaffna was kept up!

We may remark at this point some reasons for the army's calling off the July advance. A common belief in the South attributes as the main reason the LTTE's thrust on 14'th July which resulted in 50-100 army casualties. This did perhaps give the army the feeling that it had moved too far too fast. But based on information available to knowledgeable persons in Jaffna, the LTTE itself did not consider the 14'th July thrust resulting in about 60 LTTE casualties a success. The army appears to have devised a drill by which an intruding party is trapped. LTTE sources consider this to have happened on 14'th July. They also believed that the army had been unaware of having trapped the intruders due to a breakdown in communication at the centre, allowing most of the intruders to escape. The LTTE was not so lucky in October when they tried the same thing at Punnalai Kadduwan and lost about 150 fighters.

The LTTE seems to have believed that the main reason for the army's calling off the July operation was the civilians' fleeing (mostly because of heavy shelling) the area where the Government hoped to set up its civil administration. The way LTTE analysts read the Government's plans for the October advance following the initial moves, was that on reaching Kopay, the army would bring Chemmani (Navatkuli) bridge under their control. There was also speculation that another party would come from Pooneryn by sea and both together

Festival of Cricket

29th MAY 1996

NORMAN PARK BROMLEY

PRICE LIST

	SPONSORS	
A	Main sponsor - S.R. Gent International	
B	Charity Sponsor - To be negotiated	TBN
C	Charity Marquees - size 20x20	TBN
D	All Trade Marquees - size 20x20	£500
E	School Marquees - Each non-participating OBA's	£300
F	- Each participating OBA's	£300
G	Souvenir - Accredited on the cover 4000 copies	£500
H	Public Address System / Rostrum	£200
I	Car park attendants - To wear coats & slogans if provided	£500
J	Toilets (per toilet)	£50
K	Grounds - 4 Per ground (Grounds 1 & 2)	£250
	(Grounds 3& 4)	£200
L	Medical Unit - first aid x 2	£150
M	Intercom telephones	£300
N	Sightscreen (per screen)	£100
O	International Match	TBA
P	International tour	TBA
Q	Hospitality marquee	TBA

STALLS

A.Trade stalls - commercial (40)	£200
B.Trade stalls - Schools OBAs & OGAs (non-participating)	£125
C. Hot food catering franchise (3)	£1000 each
D. Ice cream franchise (already sold)	£1000
E. Beer & Liquor franchise	TBN
F. Tea & Coffee stalls (2)	£250 each

ADVERTISING

A.	Hoarding around the Boundary line of each ground ½ mtr by 4mtr max.		£50
B.	Special Banners in other areas (All materials to be provided by the advertisers)		£50
C.	Advertising on the tickets -Entry tickets - 15,000		£500
	Car park tickets - 4,000		£300
D.	Souvenir advertising - Back cover		£250
	Inside front/back	each	£200
	Full page		£125
	Half page		£70

Expected print 4000 copies (Free circulation)

CONDITIONS

1. *All advertising material must be provided by the advertisers.*
2. *Advertising banners etc. must be erected by the advertisers and must comply with the safety standards set by the organisers.*
3. *All advertising material will be vetted by the Fund Raising Committee before approval.*
4. *Organisers are NOT responsible in anyway for the safety of the advertising materials, before, during, and after the Festival.*
5. *All items of Sponsorship and Advertising must be paid for at least four weeks before the Festival.*
6. *The traders must stay strictly within the stalls that are allocated to them by the Fund Raising Committee.*

All sponsors will be mentioned on the PA system once for every £ 100 paid
In addition, will be mentioned in the souvenir

All the above items will be given on a first come first served basis. If interested, for further details and reservations please contact

Dr. Narada Wijayatilake - 0181 - 930 2323
Sarath Amarasinghe - 0181 - 949 8883
Rohan De Zoysa - 0181 - 884 0276

Festival of Cricket - 1995

Income & expenditure summary

Total income	£ 71,102.00
Expenditure	£ 39,636.00
Nett surplus F.O.C 1995	£ 31,467.00
Charity	£ 6962.00
Proposed distribution to 20 participated OBAs	£ 20,000.00
Distribution to 20 participated OBAs	£ 16,000.00
Surplus balance	£ 8450.00

Surplus balance to be distributed to the above OBAs after meeting any post balance sheet expenses.

DISTRIBUTION

Jaffna Central OBA	£ 800.00
St. Johns Jaffna OBA	£ 800.00
Jaffna Hindu OBA	£ 800.00
St. Peters OBA	£ 800.00
St. Anthony's Kandy OBA	£ 800.00
Colombo Hindu OBA	£ 800.00
Ananda OBA	£ 800.00
St. Thoma's OBA	£ 800.00
Hartley OBA	£ 800.00
Richmond OBA	£ 800.00
Royal OBA	£ 800.00
St. Patricks OBA	£ 800.00
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Dharmaraja OBA	£ 800.00
St. Joseph's OBA	£ 800.00
Trinity OBA	£ 800.00
Mahinda OBA	£ 800.00
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Sri Lankan OBA's Festival of Cricket
Office bearers 1995/96

President
Rohan De Zoysa (Nalanda)
Vice Presidents
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Hillary De Zoysa (St. Joseph's)
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TENDER NOTICE

Festival of Cricket
26th May 1996
Norman Park - Bromley

Suppliers are required for the following. For tender details please contact the relevant person named below.

1. Beer Franchise
Sarath Amarasinghe - 0181 - 949 8883

2. Operation of Hospitality Marquee
Thalath Ismail - 0181 - 203 1191

3. Printing - Souvenir, Entrance & car park tickets and badges etc.
Freddie Jurampathy - 0181 363 5770

Closing date for tenders - 10.2.96

would block the Chemmani and railway bridges. This would have prevented the civilian population from moving out of Valikamam.

But this did not happen. Confusion in Government thinking made the lot of civilians far worse. There seemed to be no unity between the Government and the army, or within the army itself, on whether they wanted the civilians to stay or go. The Government for its part talked of restoring civil administration and accelerating reconstruction, but gave no clear instructions to the people. As barbaric (and barbarous) a means off communication as it was, when the army shelled certain areas, the people took it as a message to go. The army was happier when the civilians left as it made their work easier. When civilians inadvertent got 'caught', by the army, they were encouraged to flee.

By 30th October 200,000 or so refugees in the Valikamam division (the western sector of Jaffna peninsula including the city, separated from the rest of the peninsula, i.e. Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi, by two lagoons) had moved into Jaffna and other centres (Jaffna University, Jaffna College in Vaddukoddai and Uduvil Girls' School, among others). The refugees felt that by using available institutional connections and international NGOs to communicate with the authorities in Colombo, their security could be adequately looked after. They were determined to stay put and move into their homes once the army took control. In all, together with the population in Jaffna and suburbs,about 350,000 people were involved.

But following the LTTE announcement on 30th October and intimidation during the subsequent days, by 16th November the City of Jaffna for the first time in its 600 year history was almost empty. The trauma was extremely painful both mentally and physically. Why did the 'Liberators' do this?

It would often be mistaken to look for rational or justifiable reasons for a particular action of the LTTE's. In terms of its totalitarian aims, it has acquired an instinct for what developments are favourable and what are not. As an institution it has learnt through years of experience. It is quite capable of taking a precipitate decision with little or no forward planning, and then manoeuvring the developments to its advantage.

To begin with, having decided to quit Jaffna and revert to guerilla tactics, as in October 1987, it made no rational sense for the LTTE to turn the City of Jaffna into a final battle zone and bring enormous suffering and loss to the civilian population. For its brand of politics it is useful to turn Jaffna into a stage for the enactment of 'martyrdom' and a city supposedly destroyed by the enemy. The drama would be relished by Tamil nationalists abroad, irrespective of the cost to cadre and people.

If one were to look for reasons for the exodus order in the utterances of LTTE leaders and in past developments, it is perhaps not so much the imminent possibility of the Government's controlling the area and setting up a civil administration that othered the LTTE. The drama put on by the LTTE after the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 precipitating war, showed that it was rattled by the notion of sharing power with the rival Tamil groups it had disabled by force and terror in 1986 (i.e., with 'traitors' in LTTE parlance). In late 1988, the North-East Administration being in the hands of the EPRLF had sent the LTTE scurrying into talks with the arch-enemy, the 'Sinhalese Government' in Colombo. This time round, Thamilchelvan, chief of the LTTE's political wing, in his address at Jaffna Hospital, had displayed strong emotion when he said, "We will never let the EPDP run the civil administration in Jaffna". Also notable is the reckless attempt on the EPDP leader Devananda's life in Colombo in early October.

The loss of Jaffna also meant that the LTTE had lost considerable public resources and infrastructure that helped it to maintain a sizeable standing army. The continuing emphasis on recruitment gives some hint as to why the LTTE is trying to build up a large refugee population in the Vanni. It is partly an attempt to reconstitute what it lost in Jaffna, albeit under much more primitive conditions.

If we have not been moved to question ourselves so far after what has happened all these years, we as Tamils should do so now before it is too late for our community. Our documentation, as always, is based on the experiences of the victims.

The Exodus: Varying Claims and Perceptions

On the evening of 30th October, LTTE loudspeakers announced in Jaffna town: "No one must take this announcement lightly. We are doing battle intensely and bravely with a demonic force. It will attack us from several directions. We too will respond likewise. Since we are going to resist every inch against a state drunk with racism, you people must evacuate for Thenmaratchi and Vadamarachi this same night." LTTE men then went from house to house and ordered people to evacuate. They were told, "Jaffna town would soon become a battle zone. We are blowing up Chemmani bridge at 4.00 a.m. If you are not out by then, you will have to remain and face the consequences." By 6.30 p.m. Kandy Road was blocked by panic stricken people trying to leave on foot. A man who decided not to leave and went 300 yards to discuss plans with another family said that owing to the press of the multitude, the journey took him two hours.

There had evidently been privileged sections of the civilian population who had received prior notice of the exodus and had made an early exit with their moveable property. On the 30th evening people in different places were told different things. Some were told that the Chemmani Bridge (Navatkuli Bridge) would be blown up at twelve mid-night. In Uduvil people were told that the army would soon subject the area to a rain of shells. Four shells were fired into the area, which were later identified by the people as LTTE shells. People in Jaffna town were told that an army attack from Mandathivu is imminent.

Chemmani Bridge was never blown up as threatened. On the morning of that same day, the LTTE had made a proclamation of 'War-time Exigency' through loudspeakers. It was that night, after the exodus order, that the people found out what it meant.

Those in Jaffna who switched on to the LTTE's radio bulletin that night were astonished to discover that no reference was made to the exodus that had been ordered. In the days that followed, while doing everything to force civilians to leave Jaffna, the LTTE went on denying that it had ordered people to do so.

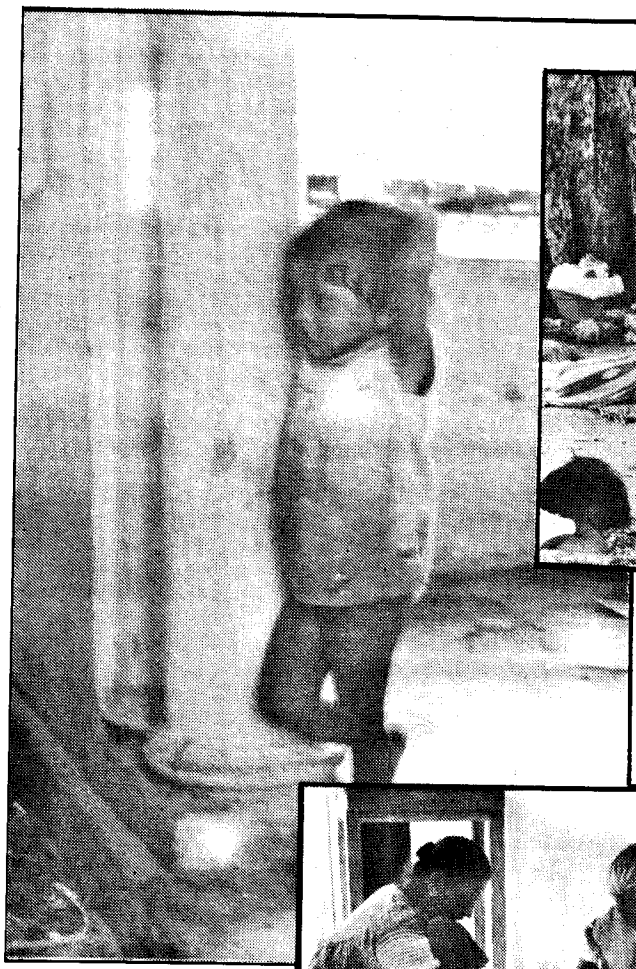
There had been a steady exodus of people from Jaffna fleeing the fighting and the bombing and shelling, owing to the fact that the Government had failed in its duty to give confidence to the civilians that tangible measures for their safety had been taken. What is worse, it was denying or greatly underplaying civilian casualties and suffering behind a mask of censorship. By its reprimand (and subsequent suspension) of the Government Agent of Jaffna, the Government was behaving as though it was treachery to talk about such matters - an ironical position for a Government that had staked much on openness, democracy, political accommodation and human rights.

On 3rd November the Spokesman for the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issued the following statement: "Reports of the massive displacement of the civilian population in northern Sri Lanka are a source of deep concern to the Secretary General. It is evident that humanitarian assistance on a significant scale will be essential to minimise suffering..."

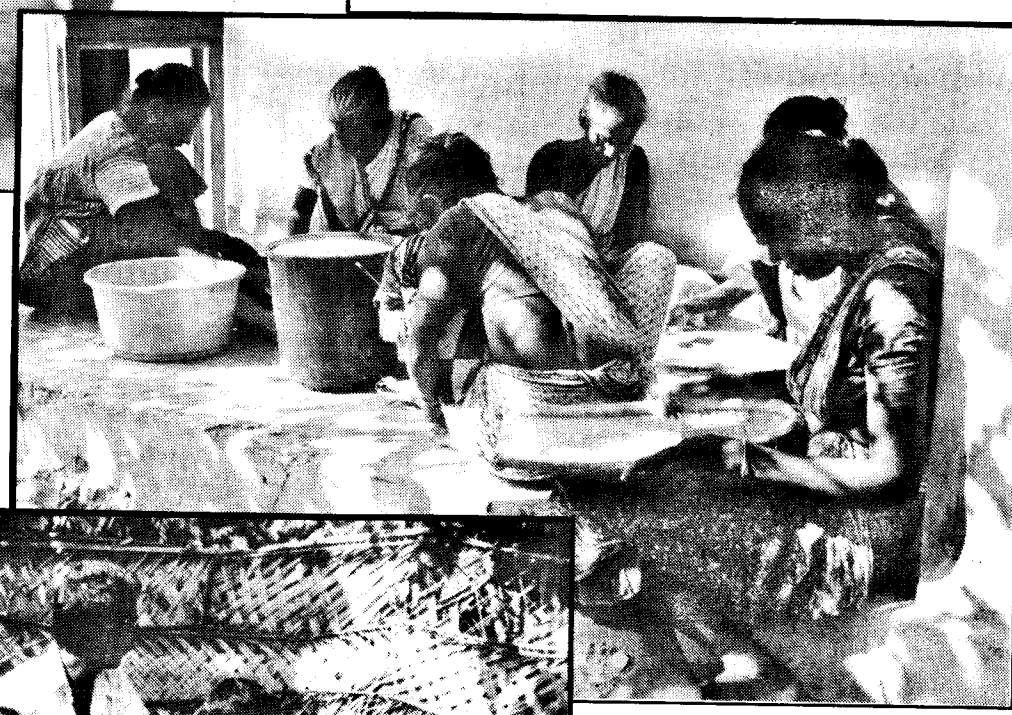
In the days that followed scores of foreign journalists came to this country to follow up the story. The Government too panicked as it came to be revealed that owing to excusable delays as well as some obstruction from the government and military machinery, there had been a significant shortfall in the food rations sent to civilians in Jaffna. It thus continued to prevent foreign journalists from going to the North. In addition to rebuffing the U.N. concern, the government (Ministry of Defence) also blocked relief workers, including doctors, from going into the refugee area. It appeared that the government wanted to hide the developing disaster from the rest of the world. Foreign journalists had therefore to be content talking to civilians coming from the North. Most civilians were afraid to talk. Nevertheless, the international media soon came to blame the LTTE for engineering a forced exodus, and thus pushing to extremes a humanitarian crisis already resulting from the military advance.

The truth however could not be denied where the people were concerned. The LTTE offered an oblique rationalisation in an appeal for recruitment issued on 8th November and published in the press in Killinochchi (i.e. Eelanadu) the following day. It read:

"In a single night along a narrow road



Images of a Community



Turned Refugees

brimming with water on either side, more than 5 lakhs of people made their exodus from Jaffna carrying only a few urgent requirements. This saga is truly one that causes unbelievable amazement. It was undertaken to escape a genocidal military onslaught. The soul of the nation was melted by the flow of this oceanic waves of humanity. There were expectant women, infants, mothers, the elderly, the sick and injured fighters. Despite the crush they came, sitting, standing, falling and crawling.

"However, through this agonising exodus, our people have given our struggle a miraculous political victory. They have revealed to the world the truth that our people cannot live, and do not wish to live, under Sinhalese military rule. Thus have they displayed their immense patriotic opposition to the Government. The Tigers salute the people for their racial pride..."

The only true claim here concerned the description of the suffering the people were subject to. This was made clear at the end of the same statement that was in effect an admission:

"Given this prospect [of bombing, shelling and genocide of those who fall among Sinhalese forces], warring against Sinhalese forces with a large number of people in Valikamam was dangerous. It would then be as though we gave the enemy the excuse for genocide. Therefore considering the safety of the people and not to have any impediment that would deter us from hitting back at the enemy effectively, it became inevitable for us to order the people to move [emphasis ours] to safer areas...We performed this historic duty with a sense of responsibility."

But to audiences abroad, LTTE propaganda continued to maintain that the exodus was an act of volition on the part of the people. An LTTE front organisation, the International Federation of Tamils issued from a London suburb a statement attributed to the University of Jaffna and allegedly signed by two departmental heads of the Medical Faculty, a professor of Tamil and two others. The statement dated 17th November said:

"We from the University, left Jaffna on 30th October 1995 with hardly anything in our hands. Such was the shelling and the panic caused by the approaching army. The continuing monsoonal weather is also against us. We [are] without proper food, psychologically traumatised...[Having striven for many years for the educational advancement of our people] today we have left everything to be one with the people. We had walked and cycled many miles in pouring rain on that memorable night of 30th October 1995..."

The story, however, as related by the people is something chilling, as we shall see. It also shows that the ordinary people kept up a sense of justice, decency and good sense despite years of fascist control. To the rulers and their elite partners the people never mattered. Suffering was constantly inflicted on them for military, political or propaganda advantage.

Prelude to the Exodus

As the army advanced and the people fled, several old people and many animals were left behind. During the early hours of 9th October, after the army was in firm control of the Puttur area, some shells were fired, which fell on the Puttur mission hospital, housing several of the old who were left behind. Nine inmates were killed. Several people in Jaffna identified the LTTE as having fired the shells and interpreted the incident as a punishment meted out to those who remained behind SL Army lines. Others opined that the shells had been meant to fall on nearby Puttur junction, considered a strong point of the SL Army. A few days earlier state television had shown army officers visiting the Methodist Mission and the medical officer in charge had made an innocuous statement to the effect: "We trust God and God will give us peace." For some time the LTTE denied the allegation that it had fired the shells, but later, according to witnesses, tacitly accepted that it had done so. Several of these who had talked to the army and later came into LTTE areas were subject to some harsh questioning. The incident along with the events of July, suggested an increasingly hardening attitude against those wanting to live in army controlled territory, despite the LTTE's inability to offer acceptable alternatives. This had been in the making from 1990 when the LTTE began projecting itself as a state power and started controlling the movement of people. Those from the Islands who were displaced when the SL Army took control in August 1990 had been refused permission by the LTTE to return to the Islands. With all the reservations they had about an essentially alien Sri Lankan Army, most of them, despite their insecurity, would have preferred going back to their homes to being refugees. They have since lived in and around Jaffna.

There were other considerations which prompted the civilians to treat the LTTE's expulsion order of 30th October with dread. Three months earlier at the end of July, the LTTE had experienced its first spectacular military failure in recent times in Manal Aru ('Weli Oya'). More than two hundred very young LTTE cadre on an offensive were mown down. The LTTE immediately blamed the failure on 'traitors'. About two weeks before the October 30th exodus order, 29 or so alleged traitors were executed in the Vanni area following the LTTE's first reverses earlier in the month. A school principal was among those executed. All were claimed to be informers of the SL Army. In the case of an elderly man who was executed, his close relatives claimed that the man's only fault had been that he sometimes drank too much and scolded the LTTE. Those who contemplated remaining behind army lines took these executions as another warning.

It was mentioned earlier that the LTTE took serious note of the failure of its counter-attack in Punnalaikadduwan leading to a radical change of strategy. There was little military activity for a few days thereafter. On 17th October the army launched 'Operation Riveresa (sunshine)' and resumed its advance towards Jaffna. Soon after the fall of Neerveli, the LTTE began shifting its personnel, stores, equipment and documents out of Jaffna. This further confirms that the LTTE had already decided to quit Jaffna if the army persisted in its advance. At this point, however, the possibility that the LTTE may ask the entire population to quit Jaffna was not taken seriously. The City of Jaffna, unlike Moolai or Puttur, was crucial to civilian life in the area. Where else could these hundreds of thousands of people be provided with schools, a university, banks, shelter, a regional hospital and administrative infrastructure?

As the LTTE began shifting its possessions, there was alarm. The camps with refugees from the Islands and Valikamam North also began to be shifted out to Thenmaratchi and Killinochchi. The dominant question in the minds of people was, "What is to become of us?" On the one hand the LTTE was evasive. Had it told the people of its intentions, there could have been an orderly exodus. The LTTE instead repeated that it would fight to keep the army out, and, even more emphatically, pressed the people to make their contributions to the LTTE's National Defense Fund.

In 1990 the LTTE had launched its liberation tax to which each family had to contribute Rs 10,000 or 2 sovereigns of gold. Even the destitute had to pay this 'once and for all', which was explained as buying shares in the future state of Eelam. It took more than two years of pressure, harassment and even selective detention to force even those without money to borrow and pay up.

The second collection was started after the army's July operation. This time the existing refugees were exempt. But others were charged varying amounts. Some businessmen were charged several lakhs. Those with family members abroad were taxed according to the number and country, irrespective of access to their money; for example, about Rs. 45,000 for a son in Switzerland. Since those living in Jaffna were increasingly poorer and the sums higher, the collection was very slow. The increased harshness of collection methods used left even LTTE supporters disturbed. Four or five persons are known to have died of heart attacks during 'negotiations' for the amounts to be paid. There were several scenes such as of a lady with a child falling on her knees and pleading. Amounts which could not be found were demanded with a note of menace. While the army moved nearer, collection meetings were frequently organised where some direct objections were raised: "You are going to take our money and run away". This was strongly denied, and the people were urged to somehow find the money.

In spite of all this emphasis on collection and squeezing out the last cent as it were, as a sacred duty the people owed the LTTE, the LTTE acknowledged no reciprocal obligation. The shortfall in government food supplies to the Jaffna peninsula was being voiced abroad as an example of the Government's genocidal intentions. In

the meantime the LTTE, in view of its monopoly over purchase and distribution, had some stocks of rice in Killinochchi. When it came to feeding the people, it fell to the Government Agent of Jaffna to request money from the Government in Colombo for funds to purchase rice from the LTTE for distribution in Jaffna. The LTTE did little to hide the fact that the GA had to function as its stooge.

After bombing or shelling several refugees left Jaffna for Thenmaratchi, but most refugees and residents stayed put. In the city the LTTE made announcements reminding people about the National Defence Fund, saying further that collection offices would be open. By this time a large number of people had gathered in churches, temples, schools and particularly within the ICRC protected Jaffna hospital zone.

The City of Jaffna: After 30th October's Exodus Announcement

Apart from the residents, the city was one of refugees. Every public building or institution was occupied by refugees. The management had once more opened Nallur Kandasamy Kovil premises to the refugees as it had in 1987. The church authorities in Jaffna and Vaddukkoddai had given information about refugees in their institutions to leaders or representatives in Colombo, to be conveyed to the presidential secretariat. The presence of the ICRC was also considerably reassuring.

The Commercial Bank opposite the hospital for example had exhausted its stocks of cash giving one and a half months' advance to its employees and making the balance available to the hospital. Moreover about 60 persons connected with the bank stocked provisions for the month and lived on the premises.

Likewise others chose safe places to stay and made arrangements compatible with their security and private obligations. Many for example went daily to their homes in places outside the conflict zone such as Manipay and Uduvil to feed their animals or tend their gardens. The common understanding was that once the SL Army took over, they would return to their homes. It was in many ways the most sensible decision under the circumstances. It was also implicit in all these arrangements that the people expected nothing positive from the LTTE. While the Government and its forces were totally alien to them, there was some hope that they could be pressurised to show some consideration towards civilian safety. They had also learnt some lessons on survival from past military onslaughts.

These preparations were no doubt objectionable to the LTTE. For six years and more the LTTE had cleansed the society of individuals who showed the least signs of independence and had done everything to control their thoughts and actions. These preparations showed that the people had a collective mind of their own, a sense of wanting to preserve something, a way of life or a civilisation, that went beyond their individual interests and lifespan. Moreover faced with a crisis and caught between two hostile forces neither of which was accountable to them, and with no individual leaders they could trust, their instinctive actions showed an independence their so-called 'sole legitimate representatives' could not stomach. It was also a powerful judgement on the LTTE. The LTTE leadership found itself obliged to do something, if only to postpone the day of reckoning.

On the 30th October evening came the anonymous, yet highly organised and terrifying, order for the exodus. There could be no doubt about who was behind the message. But also significant was the immediate gut reaction of panic to the announcement of the army's supposedly imminent approach which evoked fear based on past experience.

The LTTE announcement had given the people 4 hours to leave. So great was the panic that the people did not know what to take with them. Such was the conditioning of the people that they often forgot their birth and educational certificates and property deeds, but took great care to take along with them their LTTE supplied family cards and receipts of payment to its National Defence Fund. The Kandy and Chemmani Roads were so much packed with people that movement was hardly possible. It was moreover raining heavily. Some seeing the state of people on the road felt demoralised and decided to turn back. Had they got on to the road they would have been able to move neither forwards nor backwards.

The quarter mile from Muthiraisanthai to Nayanmarkadu alone took about 4 hours. Several children either died or were lost in the crush and several of the elderly who attempted the journey just gave up on the way or died of exhaustion. Individual testimonies are difficult to come by. For example, according to witnesses two children died in the crush near Nayanmarkadu. But who they were or from where they came is not known. Likewise with weary elders left behind and sitting along the road or lying down apparently lifeless. These were common scenes. For days thereafter people travelling along the route of the exodus testified to foul smells coming from rotting carcasses and human excreta.

In Vaddukkoddai, where a large number of refugees were at Jaffna College, the LTTE exploded some grenades near the College library to persuade people to quit. They were asked to leave by 7.30 p.m.. People left on bullock carts, bicycles and on foot. At Uduvil Girls' School a grenade was exploded in the school grounds. The flow of humanity continued for two days and more.

A family of strong LTTE sympathisers waited two days in a Jaffna nursing home intending to stay on. They had been very helpful to the LTTE, particularly to injured cadre. Two days after the order was first given, other unknown cadre came and threatened them. They were told that those who did not leave before 4.00 a.m. would be considered traitors and informers to the Sri Lankan Army, and would be punished accordingly. This, if carried out, meant execution. The family set off on foot. The roads were still crowded.

Once out of the town limits, in Chemmani, two miles of the road ran through paddy fields and an abandoned saltern on either side of the road, filled with rain water. The LTTE ordered the people to leave the road and walk through the flood water so as to leave the road free for LTTE vehicles. People continued their journey walking through water with their bags on their heads and children on their shoulders. The water was in places knee deep and sometimes neck deep.

Despite years of imposed subservience, at times the people ran out of patience. In several places, the people refused to obey the LTTE police and get off the road into the water. If one civilian started a fight with the LTTE police, the others joined in spontaneously with little thought of the consequences. Once a policeman fell on the ground and the crowd walked over him. Other policemen then rushed in to drag their fallen comrade from under the feet of the moving crowd. On another occasion a police-woman was bodily thrown into the flood. The short journey to Chavakacheri took 20 hours.

An 11 year old who came with a group from north of Navaly described his experience: "I travelled in a bullock-cart. My father walked through the flood. We occasionally fought with policemen. They hammered us and we hammered them back. Once they fired above our heads and someone was injured."

There had been much talk among the people of drowning. One group is said to have stepped into a hole hidden by rain water. Some are said to have drowned while walking through the lagoon because of the bursting crowd at Chemmani (Navatkuli) Bridge. Putting together various accounts, at least 11 people died during the exodus on the night of 30th October, of whom 3 were children and others mostly elderly. During that period the air force aimed bombs at Chemmani Bridge in which two civilians were killed.

Having arrived in Chavakacheri at the height of the rainy season, people had to contend with the near absence of food or shelter. Some who had arrived before the forced exodus considered themselves lucky sharing houses with as many as 70 people. But firewood was scarce and fires were extremely difficult to light. Newer arrivals had to pay Rs.10 or more for a thatched coconut leaf in a very unsatisfactory effort to keep away the rain. Some of them were young mothers carrying infants. Others found standing room under the eaves of houses, with two feet between the outer wall and the rain falling over the edge of the roof. While attending to a call of nature, the neighbour was asked to keep the place like keeping a seat in a crowded train. It was so difficult to find drinking water that people held their umbrellas in the rain and drank the water flowing over its edges.

Throughout the early weeks of this ordeal, as a number of witnesses testified, the LTTE offered no help at all with either relief or organisation. They only provided a free boat service for those wanting to

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION

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CANADA IMMIGRATION

Selection Criteria Changes

by
Jegan N. Mohan
Barrister & Solicitor

Canada has been recognised by the United Nations three times in the past four years as the best country in which to live. A country with one of the world's highest standard of living, relatively uncrowded and with many opportunities. Canada offers much to would-be-immigrants from all over the world. Canada's humanitarian efforts have been recognised by the United Nations by awarding the people of Canada the Nansen medal.

Canada's Immigration Program is not designed to accept any one who wishes to apply. A specified number of immigrants each year are admitted, provided they are of the type that would fit well into the Canadian society and who with their financial resources, stipulated skills and talents, enable them to make a significant contribution to Canada's development and prosperity. Keeping in mind this objective, changes are being proposed by the Canadian Government in the selection criteria for the skilled workers which will come into force on February 8, 1996. Applications received before Feb. 8, 1996 will be assessed according to the previous selection system. These changes do not affect refugees, family class or business class immigrants or any immigrants selected by the Province of Quebec. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in announcing the proposed changes stated that 'it's vital that the immigration points system be reflective of the current economic realities, as such, the proposed criteria will help Canada attract more skilled trade and technical workers who we need to help keep our economy both strong and competitive in the face of changing global economic forces'.

The immigration plan for 1996 sets 195,000-220,000 as the overall range of immigrants and refugees. The 1996 number includes 171,000-187,700 immigrants and 24,000-32,000 refugees. within the immigrant category, 50 percent are in the independent economic class and 46 percent are in the family class.

Canada needs immigrants. But this is not say that its doors are wide open for indiscriminate immigration or illegal entry. The immigration policy is tied directly to the development of Canada's labour force, its standard of living and to national population goals. In Canada's rapidly changing knowledge and technology based economy, it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict which occupations will be needed in the medium to long term period. The new selection criteria imposes that all labour market participants must be literate, numerate, and able to adjust to changing circumstances. The global economy requires flexibility, resilience and good learning capabilities. For this reason, the new selection criteria emphasises qualities which are common among occupations. They require that successful applicants have a full complement of generic skills. The new criteria for selection are knowledge of official languages, education and trade certificates, recent experience, age and adaptability to the Canadian labour market. Additional points may be awarded to those who have arranged employment or a relative in Canada.

The previous system focused too much on filling precise occupational niches and was biased towards those who were in highly skilled professional occupations, allowing those applicants to meet those requirements of the selection system even if they lacked the fundamental skills demanded by the employers. At the same time applicants in the skilled trade or technical occupations, had great difficulty meeting their requirements of the previous system even if they possesed all the attributes necessary for success.

To correct the biases in the old system – towards those in highly skilled professional occupations and against those in skilled trades or trained technical occupations – the new system divides the skilled worker program into four broad occupational categories (i.e. professional, skilled administrative, technical and skilled trades). Although all applicants will be assessed according to the same selection criteria each category has a different pass mark, reflecting different education, language and experience standards for the respective occupational groupings.

The number of skilled workers who will be issued visas in each occupational category will be subject to a numerical limit which will be set out in the Minister's annual immigration plan. Applicants will be dealt with on a first-come first-served basis. Applicants with arranged employment and dependents of the principal applicants will not be subject to limits. The changes allow all applications potentially be assessed on paper. Therefore, the prospective immigrant to Canada is called upon to complete his or her application form with as much and detailed information as possible which must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

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cross Jaffna lagoon into the Vanni. LTTE vehicles went up and down the Chavakacheri -Jaffna road, passing drenched women holding on to infants and children under trees, but offering no help.

At Chavakacheri queues for a cup of plain-tea were about two hours long, while queues for bread, continually baked at a few bakeries, were about 5 hours long. A person was allowed only a pound loaf. The scarcity of food was such that a senior member of a family had to get up about 3.00 A.M. after sleeping late and join a bread queue 2 miles long. Later tokens were issued where a person would first queue up for a token in the morning, and later spend 2 hours in a bread queue. Matters were made worse by the non-availability of cash. The banks too were not functioning. Most people were thus in very desperate straits.

There was a good deal of suppressed anger among the people over what had been inflicted on them. It often burst out in a spontaneous unorganised manner. In one of those long bread queues in Chavakacheri one man blew up: "We are being treated as slaves. If this is their behaviour now, how would it be when we get Eelam?" Unlike in other times this was not greeted by others in fearful silence or with words of caution. But others joined in with the kind of sarcasm for which Jaffna is renowned. One shouted back, "Only those with knowledge must speak. Others must shut up." Another said, "Shut up or these fellows 'will land you one on the forehead'." Someone else added, "Watch it, they would stuff a frog down your throat." As this exchange was going on, the police arrived and ordered the first speaker to get into their vehicle. The man was vocal in his refusal. Finally he was dragged inside and the vehicle drove away.

During the course of these events, LTTE cadre needing medical care were removed from Jaffna. They, together with other patients from Jaffna hospital and others newly needing medical care, had all to be accommodated in the much smaller Chavakacheri Base hospital. The beds were reserved for LTTE patients and others had to take the floor. Two senior LTTE men were heard sharing a joke: "Give two months and the people would forget all this".

Developments in Jaffna

Even after the first phase of the exodus there were a large number of people in Jaffna who were determined to remain. An important consideration for them was the presence of the ICRC and the Jaffna hospital safety zone it controlled. In order to break this, the LTTE's strategy was to first apply pressure on the medical staff to move Jaffna hospital. And, when the news of the exodus order reached Jaffna hospital, pandemonium broke loose. The surgical team had a heavy schedule and was operating late. When they heard about the order, they walked out and sat down in the lounge, paralysed by shock. The LTTE had spread the word that the SL army was coming into the city from Mandativu, and that all the doctors had fled. A large number of patients, medical staff and a few junior doctors had fled the hospital to join the milling crowds choking Kandy Road. In many cases, the patients themselves or their relatives pulled out catheters and tubes connected to the body and left the hospital. (Some of them were admitted to Chavakacheri hospital, days later; but what happened to the rest of the patients is guesswork.) In the intensive Care Unit at Jaffna, one patient died of cardiac arrest as the nurses had fled. But the senior staff at Jaffna hospital and a core of the others continued to remain and work as a team. Nearly all LTTE injured were cleared by the LTTE medical team.

In the next few days as uncertainty continued in the hospital, several high-ranking LTTE men came there. When asked by individual doctors for clarification of the exodus order on the 30th, it was pointed out that the loudspeaker announcement had not claimed that it was the LTTE's.

Thamilchelvan, the leader of the LTTE's political wing, addressed a meeting of the hospital doctors about 3rd November. It was clear that he was talking at two levels. At one level, the diplomatic level, he was very reassuring - the LTTE needed the hospital for some more days. He reiterated the position that the LTTE would respect the ICRC zone and the agreement concerning it. They would never, he said, force the closure of Jaffna hospital. But, at the other level, there were undertones suggesting that they would do the very opposite. One was his reference to never allowing the rival Tamil group EPDP to run a civil administration in Jaffna cited earlier. Another was a strongly stated aim that "they would never let go of their younger generation [from under their wings]". This meant that no family with children (i.e prospective recruits) would be allowed to live outside the control of the LTTE. He also said that if either side broke the ICRC zone agreement, which required 72 hours' notice, there would be no safe access to the outside world thereafter. Some of the doctors interpreted Thamilchelvan's talk as giving in effect 72 hours' notice for the closure of Jaffna hospital, since this anticipated event had been very much in the air. The doctors raised questions and argued back. He was told, "You are going to revert back to guerilla warfare. But one day you hope to come back and run this place, and then the hospital would be necessary. Is it not therefore better for you to preserve this hospital?" Throughout the interview Thamilchelvan remained smiling and seemed to be patient and attentive. Finally, he told them, "Do whatever the ICRC tells you."

The doctors were relieved. They thought that they had won their case. Thamilchelvan had also been to see the ICRC. The following day, the whole picture was reversed, when they heard that the ICRC was considering pulling out and they would have to follow. The same day, a few concerned doctors went to see the ICRC. From what they gathered it appeared that Thamilchelvan had persuaded the ICRC that everyone in Jaffna was leaving, so that there would be no reason for the ICRC to remain. One of the doctors asked the ICRC poignantly, "There are a hundred thousand people left in Jaffna. Are you going to leave them all and go away?" The ICRC representative responded with some alarm, "One hundred thousand? Or, do you mean one thousand?" The doctor replied, "One hundred thousand is correct." He explained the locations of the refugees in Valikamam, including those out of town, and said that nearly all of them intended staying. It was from this conversation that the doctors concluded that Thamilchelvan had persuaded the ICRC that all the people were quitting.

The ICRC representative then explained that from what he had been told, the LTTE intended to mine all the access routes to their zone, in which event they would all be trapped. He then said sadly, "I might personally like to remain. But the head office in Geneva would probably order us to move." The doctors were crestfallen.

From the following day the ICRC prepared for the eventuality of moving out. The doctors were consulted about their preferences and lists were made of those who would work in Chavakacheri and Pt. Pedro. The Jaffna hospital zone had been patrolled by the ICRC and any LTTE cadre carrying arms within this zone was scolded and asked to move out. But after the LTTE had ordered the exodus, armed cadre were often seen in the safety zone. The ICRC told the doctors to be ready to move out on foot at short notice, adding to the alarm among civilians.

On 1st November the hospital had several hundred patients and staff. This number kept declining as even some serious patients quit. The talk got around the hospital that the LTTE was placing its cannon on the zonal boundary to fire at the army across the lagoon at Mandaitivu. Firing noises were also regularly heard within the hospital zone. The LTTE had ordered the shops in Jaffna to close. Although those in Jaffna had provisions, they had to cycle to Thenmaratchi for fruits and vegetables.

The LTTE's attitude towards the civilians too was becoming openly intimidatory. A large number of refugees were at John Bosco school next to the ICRC at the Temple Road-Rakka Road junction. The LTTE fired what are believed to have been fake shells at this camp. Shells were also fired near Ariyakulam and Pathirakali Amman temple, but no casualties were reported. The LTTE claimed that the shells were fired by the SL Army. But from the sound the people were certain that it was the LTTE. Near Kanthasamy Kovil some refugees wee beaten by masked men. Sometimes masked persons went into private premises, pulled out knives, helped themselves to young coconuts and behaved in an intimidatory manner. About 2nd November the last of the refugees were forced out of the Medical Faculty of the University of Jaffna.

Last Scenes

At the time the LTTE made the expulsion order those remaining in Jaffna did

so in the expectation that the SL Army would move in quickly. But this did not happen and things were comparatively quiet for a few days in early November.

These developments led to dissension among the civilians. Some felt it was better to leave soon while they could remove some of their moveable property, rather than wait for the last minute and lose everything if the LTTE chased them out. Once more the exodus picked up. Persons who had left Jaffna were prevented from returning by police sentries manning Navatkuli. Those coming to collect their things were given a day-pass until 4.00 p.m.. Overstaying was an offence. The road to Chavakacheri was regularly crowded with people removing their things. Some doctors visiting the bank observed, "The big guys have created an atmosphere of panic. The people are now moving".

LTTE cadre now sought out houses where the owners were still in occupation and set about targeting them for intimidation. Sometimes gun positions were mounted close by or rockets were fired. Those walking the roads were sometimes deliberately given a fright when a mortar shell landed close enough. A house was sometimes surrounded and the inmates asked to come out. They were told, "The army is coming to Jaffna because of Tamil traitors. We have received information that there is a traitor in this house. We will conduct a full search. Why would people want to remain in Jaffna when the army takes over, unless they are traitors?" Sometimes the householder had the presence of mind to throw back at the LTTE its pretence of legality, by insisting that the house could not be searched unless they came with a warrant from Thamilchelvan. Such efforts were of no avail. Search meant that contents of bags were spilt out and even women's items gone through one by one.

During early November there were periods of little discernible activity on the side of the Government forces. They were strangely silent. This was not what the LTTE wanted since it wanted the civilians to leave. The LTTE could be heard repeatedly firing into army controlled territory in a bid to provoke them, but with no response.

By 11th November harassment and sounds of LTTE firing inside town as well as noise from the intensity of fighting outside town reached a point where most remaining residents left their homes and went to schools and churches. During the early hours of 12th November the LTTE made a final bid to drive away the remaining civilians from town. About 2.00 a.m. the LTTE broke down the gates of Chudikuli Girls' College and barged in noisily. The refugees were ordered to assemble. Militant cadre barged into class rooms and dragged out sleeping refugees with no respect for age or sex. An infirm lady who was semi-blind was grabbed by the wrist and pulled off her bed, while her daughter screamed in protest.

Once assembled, following the usual harangue, the refugees were asked, "Those who want to remain when the SL Army comes in, raise your hands and give your names and addresses." No one spoke or protested. After sunrise the refugees dispersed to other churches. The LTTE was to bring lorries to transport those remaining. (From the time the LTTE started moving its things, it had commandeered all lorries belonging to Multi-Purpose Co-operative Societies.) Some clergymen accepted the LTTE's move to shift them with resignation. One said, "They want us to go. We have little choice." Some strong resistance appears to have been put up by the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission. It was reported that in a melee, a leading elder, an electrical engineer, had been pushed down and dragged by his feet into a lorry, thereby causing bruises to his body. The pastor of the Kandy Road church is said to have been hit on the shoulder resulting in a fracture or a bad sprain that caused much swelling.

The principal of Chundikuli Girls' College was a cautious lady who had avoided confrontation with the LTTE, but had kept her reservations. The LTTE breaking into the school at 2.00 a.m. was the last straw. She told them, "I am leaving everything open and am going. Do what you like."

A number of clergy were among those assembled in a church. The LTTE asked them to leave and the clergy refused. The LTTE shot dead two dogs outside the church and warned those in the church that this may become their fate too. In some other places, those who refused to go had shots fired into the ground by their feet, resulting in pebbles flying up and injuring them.

Among those most bitter were persons who had built themselves up under LTTE rule and had developed a vested interest in its continuance. All of a sudden the bubble burst and their world had emptied. This was true of some of the church leaders, professionals, professors, traders and manufacturers. They cursed the LTTE as intensely as they had boosted it in the past. For all their flattery, the LTTE now indicated plainly that they counted for nothing. Some even said that the Sri Lankan Army was better than the LTTE.

A doctor had narrowly escaped the Welikade prison massacre in July 1983. He had lived in Jaffna, was the manager of a leading private boys' college, and the LTTE had been readily accessible to him. He had a number of animals and birds at home. In asking him to quit, out of deference to him, the LTTE offered him a car. The doctor indignantly turned it down. He, his wife and daughter mounted on three bicycles and moved out of Jaffna.

As the first two weeks of November wore on, the LTTE got about removing things in the houses of what they regarded valuable - furniture, electrical items, household items and roofing. Teams of boys worked like termites to gobble up houses in about two hours. What meant nothing to the organisation, namely books, documents and photographs collected over generations, were left abandoned in heaps for the wind, the rain and the termites.

Much of the equipment belonging to the University of Jaffna including microscopes and other laboratory apparatus were carted away to Palai and dumped in an open field which has been christened 'The Open University'. The Jaffna Hospital equipment and much of its asbestos roofing was also removed. Its supply of fuel and drugs too was carried away. The scene at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Jaffna in Thinnevely about 12th November, left memories even more painful because of contrasting impressions. The Faculty had been completely ransacked and turned into a fortress and a nerve-centre for the final defence of Thinnevely. There were trenches across the roads in the locality to serve as tank traps. Sandbags were evident everywhere. Narrow trenches led to the boundary wall to accommodate defensive positions made up of stacked sandbags. There were also gun positions all over,

These first impressions took the minds of the visitors through the long and laborious years through which the institution was built by dedicated souls, some of whom are, thankfully, at rest. Those long hours of committee meetings, consultations with architects and contractors, trips abroad for recruitment and canvassing of staff and materials, hassles with the Government for funds and permission to import equipment - all this was to disappear in the twinkling of an eye, in a brief and futile military encounter. In other countries at war, armies kept away from monuments to the heritage of the people, and even as the enemy advanced, dedicated people remained in those institutions to protect them. Here in the name of liberation, the heritage of the people and of future generations was being sacrificed for transient military use.

The second impression was in sharp contrast to the first. The place was full of young LTTE cadre - boys about 16 or 17. Several of them were playing badminton. Others were cleaning themselves after a day's work, applying soap and bathing in leisurely fashion. The war seemed far away from these young boys. Did they realise that at this time the next day a number of them would be corpses or would be lying in hospital with their limbs blown off? How did they become caught up in this monstrous fate?

The experience was most painful for those with dependents who could not be moved. From many parts of Valikamam there were reports of elders heard screaming as those younger left them in their homes and joined the exodus. Several of those about to quit Jaffna on 13th November looked up their animals for what was probably to be the last time. Although the fighting and sounds of shelling were heavy, the SL Army was careful not to shell Jaffna town. Cows about to calve and gazing helplessly had to be left to fend for themselves. Some forced to leave behind their dogs, walked miles to lea them in familiar surroundings. On that day the sound of shelling could be heard loudest in the northern precincts of Jaffna. Buildings were vibrating as though there was a giant earthquake. The dogs left behind were transfixed by fear or were running aimlessly only to find that one place was no better than the other.

In most parts of Jaffna and surroundings there was an unbearable stench coming from animals starved to death and rotting on the roads. Those dogs that were alive, filled the air with their constant howling for their masters (themselves wailing) and because of the stench of death.

Society had become apathetic about very young children being tricked or dragooned into serving the LTTE leadership. Those close to the children cried in their homes. But otherwise there was little noise. Bishops, professors and religious gurus had talked and behaved as though this was the normal order of things. It was all sanitised. Yet, the terrified howls of creatures being deserted, against the continuous blasting of artillery shells, was something that wrenched the heart and pierced it with a recurring pain. The experience recalled to mind the lines of William Blake:

A dog starv'd at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
A Horse misus'd upon the Road
Calls to Heaven for Human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear...

To those receding from the scene, these cries of agony seemed to translate into curses to be borne by the Tigers.

The last evacuees boarded the lorries. Passing Jaffna's deserted suburbs, and then the last habitations marked by fences, coconut trees and a broad stretch of Kandy Road, the travellers emerged into open space, the flooded fields of Ariyalai East on either side. Beneath the lowering sky, the road stretched out towards the Bo-tree junction, one and a half miles away, and beyond it over the dull blue waters of the lagoon and then the tree-lined horizon marking Navatkuli. It was a scene of desolation where the hands that channelled the waters and tended the fields were all fled. Only the winter birds whose yearly peregrinations had pre-dated mankind's labours were there. The evacuees spontaneously broke down crying.

(Continued in next issue)

FLAGS OVER JAFFNA: 05/12/95

by **Prof. Kopan Mahadeva**

Today, I saw a few flags in single-file fluttering in the wind –
Flags over Jaffna, the severed face of the Pearly Island;
Flags of a power faithwise foreign to the folks of Jaffna,
Fluttering in the faltering winds of the Indian Ocean.

I saw the flags flying, I saw them fluttering. I saw them on the screen. I did.
They reflected a ferocious red, with faintly grinning yellow line in parts,
And stood a lion in the centre of each, baring teeth and brandishing a sword.
They were flags belonging to the State's armoury of my old Pearly Island,
The Pearly Island where I was born, grew up and left behind my youth.

It is a State which has so far failed to treat all its varied citizens alike,
The State dominated manipulatively by the people of a linguistic mass,
The State dominated unduly by distorted followers of a glorious faith,
Oppressing the other so-called races of the other language and faiths,
In a so-called democracy, hoodwinking the entire world with words.

We are a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious, plural society,
Their present leader says. We accept that racial oppression was practised
By all past governments and administrations and political rulers, true,
Their leader says. We will now treat the minorities equally, just like us,
Their leader says, 'but after crushing their armed struggle and its leader'.

But, will she ever be fair? Where do we go from here? What do we do?
Will she be just to the people of Northern Eelam and its nerve-head Jaffna?
Will she dismantle her powers of a dictatorial president, as she promised?
Will she reform the Pearly Island's ill constitution?
Will she? Will she?
Will the people of my ancestral nation and other ethnic groups survive?

If our struggle was based on genuine grievance against misrule, as it was,
If it is true that we live today in a civilised 20th Century world, as we do,
If teachings of the faiths practised in the Pearly Island are adhered to,
If its leader is really a leader worth her above-said words, and if she's true,
If losing of battles are for finally winning the big wars of justice and peace,
Then, let those flags fly for some days till Jaffna's flag is soon hoisted instead.

TAMIL CONCERN

'Tamil Concern' is a new group organised by concerned Tamil Citizens in the U.K. **Its aim is to meet the much-felt need for an organisation that will get things done, not simply by raising money but by organising and co-ordinating self-help and mutual asistance among both Tamils in Sri Lanka and Tamils displaced to other countries in the world.**

Short Term Objectives

In the short term our aim must be to provide all possible aid to cope with the massive humanitarian disaster taking place in Sri Lanka. Over half a million refugees are displaced into camps in the worst calamity of its kind since Rwanda. There is no immediate end in sight for their plight, nor is it foreseeable how long the military operations will continue or what will be left of our homeland's infrastructure when they finish.

Long Term Objectives

Our aim is also to better the lot of Tamils displaced to the U.K., Europe and other countries. Though none of these are in desperate straits as our displaced countrymen in Sri Lanka, many still face poverty, discrimination, fear, uncertainty and hopelessness. Our aim is to provide the necessary assistance to enable our fellow Tamils in the U.K. and other countries to improve their lot, by **mutual assistance and self-help**. Among projects under preparation are a Job and Training Club, Careers Advice Bureau, Business Start-Up Advice Unit, an Information Network using both the Internet and other media

Our aim is to facilitate the creation of a mutually supportive community which can prosper abroad and therefore be able to assist less fortunate people in the Tamil community both in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. History teaches us that refugee groups who stick together and assist each other prosper where divided groups may remain in poverty. The example of the Ugandan Asians is a positive one. In the harsh world of 1990s Europe, it is more than ever necessary for our people to assist each other.

We urge our fellow Tamils who are willing to give time and advice to write to: **Tamil Concern, 54A Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7PD**; R. Ganeshalingam, Croydon.

Capture of Jaffna - What Next ?

by D.Sivaram, Colombo

How will the Chnadrika government handle the problem in the Northeast of the island politically and militarily in 1996 ?

Let us examine the military situation first. Following the fall of the Jaffna town and the whole of the Valligamam division of the peninsula coming under government control - albeit with negligible number of civilians living there - the government is saddled with the cumbersome and expensive task of maintaining a very large and unprecedented number of troops in the peninsula. This will undoubtedly be one of the central concerns of the military hierarchy in the months to come.

When the government launched the Jaffna operation in July 1995, it did not have a supply system which was adequate to meet the challenge of maintaining all its required forces in Jaffna. In fact after the LTTE shot down Sri Lankan airforce planes over the northern skies, the supply situation in the Elephant Pass camp and the Pooneryn camp was quite precarious. It was so bad that some analysts in Colombo were worried that the LTTE could make use of the situation to completely cut off through a limited operation the sea access to both camps and then prevent with the aid of its anti-aircraft units any supply by air from reaching the troops inside the two bases.

The fear was to some extent justified and substantiated by the claim made by the LTTE it its official publication, 'Viduthalai Pulikal' that they were in a position to soon cut off the army in Jaffna from all its sources of supply from the south and thereby make Jaffna the Dhien Bhein Phu of the Sri Lankan military.

Furthermore, the actions by the Tigers since the beginning of Eelam War III made it amply clear that they were 'going for the jugular' as it were by stepping up and concentrating their attacks on the Navy's operations in the eastern maritime zone, which remains the vital and indispensable sea-link to the government's positions in the north. These Tiger attacks resulted in the loss of several Navy vessels.

It is apparent now that the Tigers underestimated the government's capacity to keep its bases in the north well supplied and to transport the large number of additional troops and military hardware required for the Jaffna offensive, despite the substantial pressure the Tigers brought to bear on the military's sea supplies through the eastern maritime zone.

The government in this context either gambled in undertaking the massive operation in Jaffna in the full knowledge of the LTTE's intention to cut off supplies, or it had reliable intelligence the LTTE did not possess the capacity to critically cripple the military's supply system to the North. Compared to the many military operations undertaken previously in the north, the recently completed Jaffna offensive must be regarded as a relative success. However, the government is today confronted with the task of expanding and consolidating its logistics in the northern theatre of operations. If it had gambled in the matter, then it cannot count on its luck for long in view of the damage done to its supply lines to its supply lines to the north during and before operation Riviresa.

The Tigers claim that they destroyed two navy vessels on 2 October 1995 and that "on 17.10.95 special units of the Black Sea Tigers infiltrated the Trincomalee harbour and destroyed three navy vessels in order to cut off supplies to operation Riviresa". Although the LTTE's objective in undertaking these two operations did not obviously pay off at that juncture, there is no gainsaying the fact that the post Riviresa logistical scenario is not a pleasant one for the government.

The government's present problem can be stated as : there are vastly more troops in Jaffna than what any government in the past attempted to deploy there; the immense needs of these troops can be supplied only air or sea; the military's potential for this was not, in any significant manner, enhanced by the government since the commencement of hostilities in April last year; however the losses sustained by the military in the air and sea in Eelam War III have been unprecedented; therefore there is a very sensitive military disequilibrium in the north today.

The military strategists in Colombo seem to be generally agreed on how to surmount this problem. They have argued for opening a land supply route to the peninsula. Such a route would, from the moment it is established, tremendously bring down the cost of keeping the troops in the north supplied; it would also greatly facilitate the transfer of men and material to government positions in the north. (It may be recalled that, during the currency of peace talks between the government and the LTTE, the Tigers refused to accept a government proposal to open the road through Elephant Pass on the ground that the troops in that base could offload supplies from lorries passing through) To achieve this objective the army has to bring the trunk road between Vavuniya and Elephant Pass under its control again.

Incidentally, some naive amateur military strategists suggested sometime ago in the Colombo press that the army should have pickets at very short distances from each other all the way from Vavuniya to Jaffna on the trunk road ! One need not expand on this rather foolish and dangerous proposal apart from seeing it as an illuminating manifestation of a central concern in the Sri Lankan military establishment, though pathetically and deplorably refracted by the zealous armchair strategist's attempt to understand the science of Clausewitiz.

The army obviously hopes to establish large camps at strategic points along this trunk road first and then ensure movement by guarding large convoys on particular days by deploying foot patrols, pickets etc., on the stretches of roads between the camps. Though such convoys could be exposed to attack from time to time, it seems to be the belief in some quarters that over time the situation can be brought under control because the LTTE would find it difficult to disperse its precious manpower by frequently engaging in ambush all along the trunk road rather than concentrating their military resources on the mainstay or very basis of the supply convoys - the camps.

If this line of thinking were to be accepted ultimately, then the army will set about establishing large brigade-size bases at Omanthai, Puliyankulam junction (which also controls access to Mullaitivu through Nedunkerny), Kanakarayankulam, Kokkavil or Murukandy, Kilinochchi including the vital Paranthan junction in addition to battalion-size camps between bases.

Now the manpower required by the army to undertake this task with some measure of confidence is great. At least six brigades have to be raised for this purpose. It has become quite apparent that recruitment to the army on a voluntary basis has reached its level and cannot be expected at all to substantially increase overnight in the Sinhala areas to meet the current need occasioned by a logistics crisis faced by the army in the aftermath of operation Riviresa. That is why the government is seriously considering the question of national conscription. It seems to be quite worried by the reality that the gains made in the Jaffna operation can be sustained only if the aforementioned disequilibrium is corrected by opening a land route to the north.The cost of task is no doubt the issue which troubles Colombo at this juncture when the political pressure in the south and within the cabinet is inevitably building up strongly in favour of national conscription. It appears that the proponents of the scheme believe that the cost involved will be a temporary one in that a large number of troops could be demobilised in a year or two during which period the Tigers, according to them, would be pushed into a manageable hit and run mode in the peninsula due to the army's ability to keep the land supply route open - which in turn would naturally diminish the LTTE's ability to substantially threaten the control of the Vavuniya-Jaffna trunk road from the jungles of the Vanni. However, the long term social and political implications this can have seems to be uppermost in the minds of key players in the Chandrika regime. It remains to be seen how her government is going to handle this quandary.

Proxy War Against India ?
Arms Airdrop Discovered by Accident

by T.N.Gopalan

An unidentified aircraft dropped a heap of sophisticated arms and ammunition, including AK-47 rifles, rocket launchers and anti-tank grenades in Purulia in West Bengal in north-east India around midnight on 17 December, and then flew quietly, unnoticed and unharmed to Phuket, a notorious international arms smuggling centre in Thailand - virtually opening a new chapter in the proxy war on India, already racked by internal rebellions of varying kinds.

The reverberations of the mysterious arms airdrop will be heard for a very long time to come, raising questions of not just the air-space security but that of the country at large.

The airdrop would have gone unnoticed and the consignees, whoever they might have been, quietly collected the cache of lethal weapons and vanished into the night but for a small accident early that afternoon.

A five-year-old girl of a village in the area had been run over by a vehicle, provoking around one thousand villages to squat on the roads protesting right into the night.

"At around 11 pm, an aircraft flying at low altitude on a course from the north-east to the southwest passed us overhead, followed by the sound of loud thumps," Priyanka's uncle was quoted in the press saying, "It was perhaps because we were there that night that none of those for whom the arms were meant dared to pick them up..."

Only the next morning the residents of Khatanga, Bardhi, Pokro Maramu and Kanodih villages in that belt of Purulia district discovered the booty lying in heaps. Some of them helped themselves to the fancy fire-arms and the news inevitably spread like wild-fire.

Ultimately, after a week-long search, the police were able to recover about 300 AK-47 and AK-56 rifles, 200 anti-tank and hand grenades, about a dozen automatic 9mm pistols, a dozen rocket launchers, 14,000 live cartridges meant for powerful self-loading rifles and many other unspecified fire-arms. The value of the recovered arms alone in the international market is said to be in the region of Rs.15 crores and they are good enough to launch a mini-war," revealed a spokesman of the West Bengal police.

A fortnight after the incident, the investigating authorities were still groping in the dark on who despatched the deadly consignment and for whom, whether it was some mix-up which led to the air drop at Purulia, how to seal off the Indian skies from such daring gun-runners and so on.

Exactly five days later the authorities, on the midnight of 22 December, the authorities claimed to have achieved a breakthrough of sorts with the 'capture' of a Russian-made AN-26 aircraft near Bombay when it was on its way to the Pakistani city of Karachi. On interrogation of the five-member crew, all of them reportedly from Latvia, it was learnt that the weapons had been dropped at Purulia out of confusion instead of a location inside Bangladesh where the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) agency of Pakistan is reportedly operating training centres for incursions into eastern India, a seething cauldron of all kinds of ethnic strife.

Intriguingly the aircraft returned to India from Phuket two days later, made a two-hour technical halt at Madras and left for Karachi but was intercepted at Bombay as by that time earlier sortie had kicked up a furore, putting the various monitoring agencies on red alert.

The halt at Madras has also give rise to speculations whether the plane had also off-loaded there some lethal cargo for ultimate use by the LTTE, though nothing conclusive has been established so far.

While the halt at Madras, for which the AN-26 crew had no authorisation from the Director General of Civil Aviation as is mandatory, has raised inconvenient questions on the laxity in the functioning of Air Traffic Control, the whereabouts of the seventh man in the aircraft - apart from the five-member crew, there was a Britain who had reportedly arranged the purchase of the plane by the Hong Kong-based Carol Air Services and had been nabbed - Kim Peter Davy, a New Zealander and a financier who is said to have slipped out in the dark at Bombay, are another headache.

He is said to be the kingpin in the entire operation and his escape has further embarrassed the agencies concerned. With the confession of the crew that they had spent some time in Karachi before the mission, were returning there and planning more sorties has made it all the more important the real conspirators are traced, even if not apprehended, and Davy could provide a way out. But a massive manhunt including the assistance of the Interpol has also not yielded any dividends so far.

Apart from the virtual impossibility of thoroughly screening each and every non-scheduled flights entering the Indian air-space - since such a move could result in corruption, delays and disruption of genuine commercial flights - the total lack of co-ordination between various agencies such as the defence, intelligence ATC and DGCA is causing a lot of disquiet to the government.

According to some reports nearly three weeks earlier some foreign intelligence agencies, believed to be from the UK, had tipped off the defence establishment on a possible such arms-dropping mission, but there was no follow-up.

Another matter of concern is whatever happened to the arms not yet recovered, it is strongly believed that not all of them taken over by the villagers have been turned into the police. How much of them landed in the hands of the mafia is indeed a matter of speculation.

One report said that even as the police were thoroughly combing the Purulia forests, the Bihar-based mafia was beating them to the arms. Their men too had descended in large numbers in the area and were offering better prices than the paltry reward announced by the government and villagers themselves were seeking out the mafia-agents in order to both get a better price and also escape harassment by the police. For the almost perennially lawless Bihar and strife-torn North-East, the arms dropping could not have come at a worse time. Incidentally Purulia is situated at the crucial tri-junction of West Bengal, Bihar and Assam.

Ever since the break-up of the Soviet Union and large scale demobilisation of the Soviet Army and consequent laxity of governmental control and accountability, apart from the poor pay-packets of even senior officers, a dangerous situation has developed wherein those with access to arms and ammunition are easy preys of the merchants of death.

Noted commentator Harish Khare points out that the presence of a large number of Kashmiris, Punjabis and Tamils in Moscow is an important factor in the flourishing arms trade centring around the erstwhile Soviet Union, such ethnic immigrants are used by various insurgent groups to procure arms. "Weak governments, corrupt regimes, compromised generals and surfeit of guns provide the perfect ambience for arms dealers to strike gold."

Nageswary Brammanandha Honoured in Florida

The Ilankai Thamil Sangam of USA, Florida Chapter took the opportunity of the visit of the renowned carnatic singer Mrs. Nageswary Brammanandha to Florida to arrange a carnatic vocal recital and honour her. The recital was well received by the unusually large audience. The accompanying artistes were Miss Arthy and Mr. Haran.

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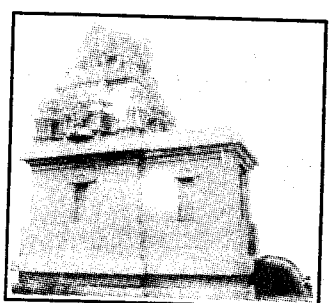

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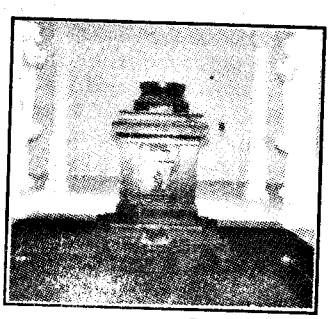

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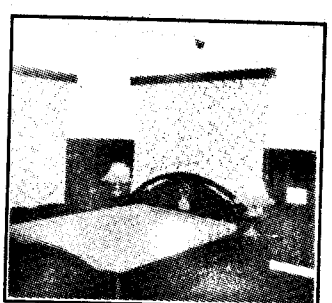

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Continued from page 10

The PA government claims that its war is against 'LTTE terrorism' and not against the Thamil people, but whenever civil targets were hit it has like previous governments tried to cover things up by blaming the LTTE. The credibility of many pro-PA peace-and-human-rights-wallahs collapsed under the burden of their muted responses to these atrocities while the government was making political capital out of alleged LTTE attacks on Sinhalese villagers.

Political commentators from India have at best been patronising. Many of them like to believe that the Indian government was really doing Sri Lanka and the Thamil people a favour by trying to impose its will on the various parties to the dispute in the way it did. The opportunism of the major political parties of Thamilnaadu was transparent right from the beginning and the Hindi-Hindi elite establishment in power at the centre consistently misled the liberation movements about its intentions regarding an independent Thamil Eelam. Very few commentators from India have displayed sufficient courage to criticise the Indian establishment's meddling in the affairs of its neighbours. Their lack of vision is no worse than that of the political acrobats of Thamilnaadu who were pushed into organising a *bandh* by the wave of public anger preceding the fall of Yaalppaanam (or was it the conquest of Yaapaapatuna).

The way in which one interprets the events in Sri Lanka are to a great extent conditioned by the way one perceives the national question. Those who do not recognise the struggle of the Thamil people as one for national liberation, which does not necessarily mean secession, see only terrorism. Those who recognise the struggle as something more than that to assert one's ethnic identity, as a struggle for survival as a nation with its identity and dignity intact, find that there is no choice but to acknowledge the reality that the LTTE is the only credible force at the moment that is fighting for that cause and defending the Thamil people against the genocidal war waged by the armed forces.

Some think that anyone who supports the liberation struggle should not criticise the LTTE and even go to extremes to silence voices of dissent. The activities of such individuals have in fact harmed the LTTE and the liberation struggle by antagonising people who could have been potential allies. They even encouraged the view that Thamil Eelam was round the corner, although the LTTE leadership, in fairness to them, had been far more cautious about setting a time limit. They underestimated the struggle for national liberation against an oppressor with considerable military strength and powerful allies, and the fall of Yaalppaanam was a true shock to them. Many supporters of the PA government did not conceal their glee at the fall of Yaalppaanam, but they are short-sighted. Recent history has shown that liberation struggles do not cease until there is justice. The people of tiny East Timor have continued to defy the Indonesian aggressors although it is two decades since their land was occupied by the armed forces. The Indochinese nations defied the French, the Japanese and the US until they were liberated. The people of Kashmir are waging a just struggle against the might of the Indian army. No struggle has been easy, no victory has been cheap and no liberation has been quick. The recent setback for the LTTE is a lesson for the LTTE as well as the government. The struggle for liberation will need to be transformed into a popular struggle and a people's war against an oppressor for it to last and succeed if the Sri Lankan government and the armed forces continue with the policy of finding a military solution. The democratisation of the struggle and winning over those who are not opposed to the struggle for freedom will require a review of the past and the rectification of serious mistakes. It is a good sign that Anton Balasingham has recently acknowledged that driving Muslims away from the north was a serious mistake.

The PA government by its military conquest of Yaalppaanam has achieved little more than proving the military might of the army. The price it has paid in terms of casualties is still unknown. Politically, it has strengthened the hand of the militarists since the doors for negotiations with the LTTE are likely to remain shut for the foreseeable future. Its attempts to starve into submission the Thamil people who have voted with their feet have already started to backfire. One can only hope that CBK and the PA government will realise before long that the Thamil mercenaries with their headquarters in Colombo cannot represent the Thamil people and that the failure to bring the war to an early negotiated end will lead to a prolonged struggle with little prospect of preventing secession.

The people of the North-East have suffered more than a decade of war. A large section of the population has been made homeless and deprived of its livelihood, and already too many lives have been lost. The people want peace and deserve it, not the kind associated with concentration camps but one with dignity. It is easy to claim that a solution can be imposed without involving the LTTE and all will be well after that, and there is no shortage of sycophants to applaud it. CBK has only a few real friends, who are still trying to persuade her to apply the brakes on the militarist approach and seek a negotiated solution. One can only hope that they will be heard amid the cacophony of anti-LTTE slogan mongering, and hopefully before she travels too far along the road to disaster. The war that CBK and the PA government have to fight is not really with the LTTE but against the forces of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and militarism. It is not easy to tame chauvinism and a military machinery that has been let loose. They have their own logic of self-destruction and the destruction of those who ride on them.

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu brother and sister *seek good looking reasonably educated bride under 28, for British Medical Council fully registered doctor, 34, in UK employment. Send details, horoscope, photo. M 824 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister, *seeks professional qualified partner for sister, 31. graduate, Australian citizen, 5'4", Mars eighth. Send horoscope, complete details. M 825 c/o Tamil Times.*

Sri Lankan Tamil parents *seek professional attractive girl, 20-25, for US born son, 26, US qualified MBA holding professional position. Send recent photo, horoscope, details. M 826 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister *seeks professional partner for graduate brother in executive position, 36, British citizen. Send details. M 827 c/o Tamil Times.*

Sister *seeks professional partner for brother, 35, Information Systems Manager, US citizen, Mars eighth. Send horoscope, details. M 828 c/o Tamil Times.*

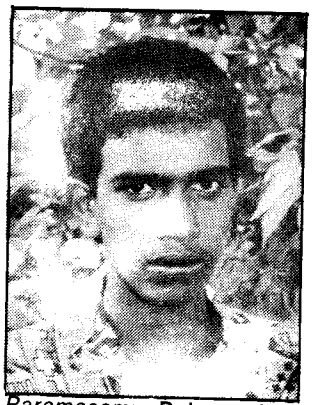
Jaffna Hindu mother *seeks professional partner for daughter, 42, professionally qualified and employed in UK, British citizen. Send horoscope, details. M 829 c/o Tamil Times.*

OBITUARIES

Mrs. Thangaratnam Muthucumarasamy, *88, relict of Mr. Sinniah Muthucumarasamy [Surveyor] of Mather's Lane, Manipay South, and Mother of* **Balendran** *(Deceased, Bank of Ceylon),* **Dr. Seethadevi** *Mahadeva (Erdington),* **Mahendran** *(Manchester),* **Theivendran** *(Colombo), and* **Rajendran** *(Manipay) peacefully ebbed away in bed at home around 20th December, and was duly cremated as per Hindu rites. Her surviving children, spouses, and 12 grandchildren hereby inform all relatives and friends of this belated shock and grief. Tel: UK: 0121-382 0109.*

Professor Karthikesu Sathasivampillai, *Retired Senior Agricultural Economist, Asst. Director, Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Selvaluxmy (Singapore); loving father of Sivanjali Yoganathan (Singapore) and Sivachelvam (UK); father-in-law of Dr. Yoganathan; brother of Arasapillai, Dr. Somasegarampillai, late Sivapathasuntharam, Mrs. Selvanayagi and Mrs. Sivaneswary; brotherin-law of Dr. Kanthapakiyam, Thilagawathy, late Sinnathurai and Kulanayagam; grandfather of Suthahar, Sureka and Suhanya passed away peacefully on 14.12.95 in Singapore and funeral was held in Singapore on 17th December. – 66 Farrer Road, 03-06 Spanish Village, Singapore 1026. Tel: 4677358/ 21 Maitland Court, London W2 3PA. Tel: 0171 706 4501.*

Miss Sivakamasunthari Thambyahpillai, *born 28th July 1974, beloved daughter of the late Dr. Thambyahpillai and Mrs. Thambyahpillai of Bickley, Kent and dearest sister of Shiyamalanayagi passed away on 10th November 1995. – 59 Cloisters Avenue, Bickley, Kent BR2 8AN. Tel: 0181 467 2369.*



Paramasamy **Baheerathan** *(Alias Vinnvalzan), Born: 17.09.78. Martyrdom: 14.11.95, beloved son of Mr. Paramasamy and Mrs. Thilagawathy Paramasamy; brother of Paskaran (London), Mrs. Bawani Vetharaniyam, Parameswaran, Thilageswaran (all of Tamil Ealam) attained martyrdom during the battle between LTTE and Sri Lankan forces at Kondavil on 14.11.95 at 4.30 p.m. Funeral took place on 16.11.95 in Tamil Ealam. Message from P. Baskaran, 245 Chase Road, London N14. Tel: 0181 882 3882/ 0956 590692.*

Beatrice Sugithamalar Samuel, *86, retired teacher, died on November 14, 1995, at the Bethel Health Center. She was the wife of the late Isaac William Samuel, and had lived at 200 Franklin St. Ext., Danbury.*

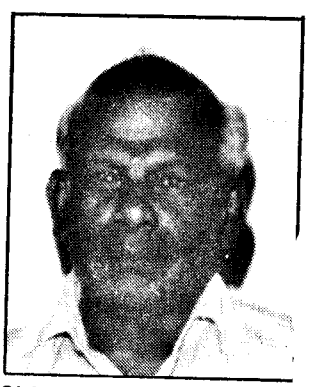
Mrs. Samuel was born in Sri Lanka on December 17, 1908, daughter of Gilbert and Thirevium Ponnambalam Clark. She was educated in Sri Lanka, graduating from college there with a degree in music. After teaching music in Sri Lanka, she immigrated to the United States in 1981 and taught in the Danbury schools for a short time. She was an accomplished violinist and pianist.

Mrs. Samuel was a member of St. James Episcopal Church and the Danbury Senior Citizens.

Mrs. Samuel was survived by four of her beloved children: Dr. Raji Satchi and husband Dr. M. Satchi, with whom Mrs. Samuel lived in Danbury, CT. Three sons, Bala Samuel and wife, Kamala Sunderampillai, of Ontario, Canada, Jaya Samuel and wife, Premina Emerson, also of Ontario, Viji Samuel and wife, Jennifer Pathinathan, of Melbourne, Australia; and the wife of the late Raju Samuel, Mary Benjamin of Danbury, C.T.

Mrs. Samuel also took great pleasure in her 12 grandchildren, great granddaughter, and several nieces and nephews.

She will be greatly missed by all.



Sithamparapillai Chelliah Thambiah *(79), Retired Overseer and High Priest of Veerapathira Pathirakali Ambal Kovil, Sangarathai, Vaddukoddai; beloved husband of Thigalmathy, retired principal; loving brother of Annamma and Sithamparapillai; loving father of Sivasunthari (Jaffna), Thirunesan (UK), late Sukumaran Snr., Kalyani (Colombo), Indradevi (UK), late Sukumaran Jnr.; father-in-law of Ganesathasan (Jaffna), Malar (UK), Kumaresan (Colombo), Alagesan (UK); loving grandfather of Sutharshani (Jaffna), Priyatharshani (Switzerland), Sumadine (UK), Sharmilla, Ramesh (Colombo), Jenny and Rex (UK) passed away on 19.11.95 in 'Thavali', Vaddu-East, Vaddukoddai, Jaffna. Sadly missed by wife, son, daughters, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends.*

The members of the family thank all relatives and friends who sent messages of sympathy and consoled us at this time of great sorrow. – 15 Mark Close, Southall, Middlesex, UB1 3QJ. Tel: 0101 813 9730.

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of **Justice Tellippalai Wanam Rajaratnam**, *Retired Supreme Court Judge and Member of Parliament, Colombo on the second anniversary of his passing away on 15th January 1994.*

'Two years have flown
But the memories are almost new
The tears will never cease to flow
You were so great, so kind and gentle father to us
Appa death cannot separate us
For we love you for ever and ever'.

Sadly missed and dearly loved by his wife and children.

In loving memory of **Sivagamasunthary Sitsapesan** *on the first anniversary of her passing away on 19th January 1995.*

One year has passed
Since the sad day
When our dear wife, mother, grandmother
Was called away
If our love could have saved you
You never would have died
If our tears could bring you back
You'd still be by our side.

Fondly remembered and sadly missed by her loving husband Sitsapesan; son Manoharan; daughter Savithri; son-in-law Varathan; daughter-in-law Rebecca and grandchildren Holly, Daniel and Luxmhi – 6 Cambria Lodge, 2C Oakhill Road, London SW15 2GU.

In fond memory of **Mrs. Ganeswary Tharmalingam** *of Kondavil East on the third anniversary of her passing away on 21.1.93.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her loving husband Tharmalingam; children Brabalini, Bremji and Ranjit; son-in-law Dr. W.N. Linganandhan; daughter-in-law Dr. Vani Bremji and Shamini Ranjit; grandchildren Abirami, Sathya, Praneeta, Praseetha, Prashoban, Praveen and Anjana – 32 Anvil Way, North Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 5SZ. Tel: 01245 466363.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

February 2 *Pirathosan; Feast of the Presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Feb. 4 *Thai Poosam; Full Moon.*

Feb. 5 *Feast of St. Agatha.*

Feb. 13 *Feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.*

Feb. 15 *Ekathasi.*

Feb. 16 *Pirathosam.*

Feb. 17 *Maha Sivaraththiri.*

Feb. 18 *Amovasai.*

Feb. 21 *Ash Wednesday.*

Feb. 22 *Chathurthi; Feast of St. Peter.*

Feb. 25 *Karthigai; First Sunday in Lent.*

Mar. 30 *11.00am Colombuthurai Yoga Swamigal Gurupoojah at Sree Ganapathy Temple, 123 Effra Road, London SW19.*

At Bhawan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0171 381 3086/ 4608.

Feb. 8 *7.00pm India Republic Day Celebrations. Speeches, Cultural Programme. All Welcome.*

Feb. 17 *7.00pm Maha Shivaratri Celebrations. Poojah and Prasad. All welcome.*

Feb. 18 *6.30pm Sarod by Anindya Banerjee from India.*

Feb. 22 *7.00pm Thyagaraja Day Celebrations. Cultural Programme by Sivasakthi Sivanesan and her students.*

Mr. Kandiah Kumaravelu – An Appreciation

Mr. Kumaravelu was a kinsman of my late father, Sarananamuttu. Both of them hailed from the village of Chavakachcheri. After the death of my father, Mr. Kumaravelu on many an occasion played the role of a father to me until death struck him last month.

His spacious home at Hamers Avenue, Wellawatte was an open house. It was a safe haven to many a visitor and relative who came from Chavakachcheri or for that matter from any place whether it be day or night. In his own inimitable style he would roll out a mat for one and spread a quilt for another. His devoted wife would provide every visitor with a hot cup of tea or tasty Jaffna meal. The many pairs of shoes and slippers one would see at the entrance to his home bear ample testimony to his boundless magnanimity. He took tremendous pride in identifying himself with his village and its humble folk. As a senior citizen, he was a tower of strength, a source of inspiration and a guide to many. Besides keeping in touch with his own generation, he endeared himself to the younger generation. This was evident from the chess boards and carrom boards and the players one sees at his place in the evenings.

He led a simple life believing in Gandhian principles and followed the teaching of Swami Ramakrishna. With his passing away, the mighty oak beneath whose benevolent shade many found refuge was felled. While conveying my sympathies to his dear wife and loved ones, we mourn the loss of a warm and loving person who made a special difference every day.

May his soul rest in peace.

'There is a link death cannot sever
Love and remembrance last for ever'.

Manohari Ramanathan.

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Hartley College Past Pupils Meet

Hartley College Past Pupils' Association (UK) had its A.G.M. and Annual Dinner at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre, Leatherhead, Surrey on 4.11.95. The A.G.M. was chaired by the outgoing President Dr. K. Sivakumaran. The Secretary and Treasurer presented their annual reports. Some amendments to the Constitution were accepted and the office bearers for next year were elected. The association set aside £1600 towards college projects. Key members of the Executive Committee elected for 1996 were: Mr. R. Raveendralingam (President), Dr. V. Vasandakumar (Vice President), Mr. A.N. Sivarajah (Secretary), Mr. S. Balasingham (Treasurer).

The A.G.M. was followed by the annual dinner attended by around 150 guests. The Chief Guest for the evening was former teacher, Miss B. Navaratnasingam who was at Hartley between 1953 and 1971. Guest speakers included Prof. C. Suriyakumaran (Retired Director of the UNEP, Bangkok), Mr. S. Jeyasingam (Advocate of the Point Pedro Bar), Dr. J.C. Duraisingam (Retired Director of Sports, Sri-Lanka) and Mrs. Nirmala Rajkumar (Wife of a Hartleyite). Toasts for the evening were proposed by the President Dr. K. Sivakumaran (for the Queen), Mr. V. Santhalingam (for the College), Dr. V. Vasandakumar (for the Guests), Mr. S. Mylvaganam (for the Association) and Mr. A. Puvaneswaran (for the Sports Teams). The proceedings ended with a vote of thanks by the outgoing Secretary Mr. P. Harrichandiran.

Arangetram in Paris

Twelve year old **Karthiga**, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sangarapillai Srikarthigeyan of Station Road, Jaffna and presently residing in Paris had her Bharata Natya Arangetram on 10th December 1995 at the Musee National Des Arts Theatre, Paris. She is a student of Smt Kausalya Tharmakulasingam. Kausalya is a product of the Fine Arts Academy of the University of Jaffna and presently teaches dance at ASCES Education Centre, Paris.

Young Karthiga started her performance with the Pushpanjali moving on to Alarippu and Jathiswaram in Vasantha Ragam, Nadesa Gowthuvam, Sabtham and Varnam in Anandabhairavi Ragam.

After the intermission it was the Keerthanam 'Ennalum' in Mohana Ragam which was well received by the audience. Continuing with two more Pathams she concluded the programme with the Thillana in Kanada Ragam. In spite of the general strike that prevailed in the country, it was a house full show.

Karthiga was ably assisted by Smt Kausalya Tharmakulasingam – Nathuvangam, Smt Ambika Thamotheram – Vocal, Sri Ravi Dharmaraj – Mirdangam, Sri M. Thevaraja – Violin, Smt Kamala Pathmanathan – Flute and Smt Suthamathy Srisatkunam – Veena.

Swami Haridhos Giri (Guruji)

– The scantily clad saint with no formal education in music or literature, but who moved thousands of top carnatic musicians to tears by his golden voice and astonished learned Vedic Scholars with his clear diction and authentic style of discourses – disappeared from our eyes 16 months ago. But his grand Gnanananda Mission goes on.

He emphasised the oneness of all religions and that there is no place for hatred or bigotry. He used music as a vehicle to carry his message. In his Bajans we saw audience participation where he slowly built up a crescendo thereby creating a trance under which some members of the audience stood up and danced in ecstasy.

As his greatest achievement and tribute to his Master – (the Great Saint Swami Gnanananda) he started constructing a huge Temple Complex with Prayer Hall, Guest Houses, Old Peoples home etc. The work has now been completed and the Temple consecration (Kumbabishekam) is due to take place on Friday 9th February 1996 in Thennangoor – a Holy Village 30 kms South of the Historic City of Kanchipuram.

– Wimal Sockanathan.

Priyadarsini's Natya Debut

It is gratifying to see the 'Year of Arangetrams' in London end with the polished performance by young Priyadarshini Sahadevan, at the Logan Hall on December 9th. This fifteen year old student revealed her thorough understanding of the content of every syllable and every movement in the choreography, expertly composed by Guru Prakash Yadagudde. In the opening Alarippu itself his vibrant Jatis and the synchronous steps of Priya established the essential rapport.

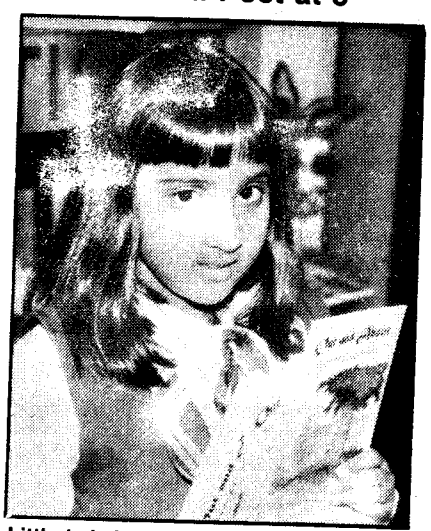
The Shabdam piece, though in the same traditional format, employed the Ramayana episodes in sequence, and Priya executed the piece with perfection. In the Meera Bhajan, the Narasimha Avatara episode was taken to highlight a clever piece of choreography in which Priya excelled. The Varnam, with the hallmark of Dandayuthapani Pillai, gave the dancer ample scope to exhibit her stock of jatis and abhinaya variations.

The availability of an 'in-house' orchestra was an added advantage in this performance as every one was in coordination. Sivasakthi's singing, with her experience in Nattuvangam, Balachandar's faultless handling of the Mridangam, and the caressing violin play of Chandru – all contributed to the fullness of the concert. The Veena accompaniment of young Hari was hidden, as his own image was. One could notice a beaming face of Guru Prakash relishing the success of his sishya.

One could not overlook the fast tempo through the entire performance. We feel a couple of slow paced Padams woven in could have balanced. Also Priya could exercise Adhara Bedam to get the correct form of smile, as in natya format the recommended one is Kumizh Sirippu, as described in the Devaram of Appar Swamikal. Priya has a bright future.

– Sivapatha Sundaram.

Lakshmi Poet at 8



Little Lakshmi Srikantha Rajah has had an anthology of poems published at the tender age of eight.

Lakshmi, a pupil at Park House Middle School, Arthur Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 is the proud bard of **'OUT and ABOUT'** – Poems for young children. The book was ceremoniously released at her school on 9th December, 1995, at a function organised by the staff and PTA of the Park House Middle School.

The large number of audience present included Mr. Tony Colman, leader of the Merton Council, Miss Jenny Cairns, Director of Education, Merton (South West London) as Chief Guest and Councillor Patric Cunnane, a leading poet in the Borough. Mr. Richard King, the Head Teacher and Miss Jenny Cairns congratulated Lakshmi on her talents and hoped that her example will be an inspiration to other children in Britain.

Poet and Councillor Patric Cunnane speaking in appreciation said for poetry, one has to have imagination and talent which Lakshmi certainly has. But poetry is also about using language to surprise and there are many surprises among these little poems. He particularly liked the poems Grandma's Garden and the Wind which has some lovely sound words – Whooshing, rattled, swished, softer, softer and recited this poem to the delight of the audience. He said poetry takes away from the TV and video and returns to us our authentic dreams and memories and advised young people to get involved in poetry.

Miss Derby Lewis, Deputy Head of Garfield Primary School, Wimbledon and Mrs. Ananthanathan, retired Head Teacher and Educationist also spoke at the function.

The book priced at £1.99 (including

postage in the U.K.) is available from **Merton Young Poets, 52 Kingsley Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8HF. Tel: (0181) 543 2126.**

Medical Institute of Tamils (M.I.O.T.) – An Appeal

This is a call to all Tamil medical and allied professionals in the UK to join us, to unite behind us, to achieve the ultimate goal for the future of our community in Sri Lanka.

As you may be aware, M.I.O.T. is an organisation of medical, dental and allied health care workers. We are not financially sound and we depend on the subscription of £20 per annum per member, and also on generous donations from colleagues and well wishers. We do not have a full time administrator at present. All office bearers serve on a voluntary basis. It is unfair by our colleagues to compare ourselves with other organisations such as the B.M.A. and O.D.A. We are not a trade union. However in spite of all the limitations we have so far contributed both financial and personal medical help to our people in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, and in the UK.

We would like to highlight a few of our contributions towards our people. Many more have been accomplished without publicity.

1. MIOT established links with Jaffna Medical administration in 1989 to coordinate the activities, to help with the supply of any shortage of essential medicines and surgical equipment, also professionals from the UK to work while they went over on holiday, so as to ease the shortage in the hospitals and in the medical school staffing. A Health Resource Centre is now being organised, to help with the future health needs of the Tamil people in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

2. From 1989 to 1992, MIOT assisted in the preparation of the PLAB Examination for those Medical colleagues who came over to the UK. Others who came for higher professional training the right contacts with local medical colleagues were arranged. MIOT also addresses the health needs of recent expatriate Tamils in the UK.

3. MIOT hopes to set the scene for the future generations of Tamil doctors, advise on career pathways and help with post-graduate education.

4, In 1994 we hosted an International Conference with TIC and TRRO (California) on 'The victims of war in Sri Lanka – A quest for Health Consensus' in London. This gave an opportunity for MIOT to be recognised and be heard by the rest of the world. Following this historic event, all papers presented at the conference by various health professionals were compiled and edited by our editorial board to produce the conference proceedings in a readable book. This is now available, and for sale at £20 per copy. The book is well received by Dr. Richard Smith editor of the BMJ and likely to be reviewed in the BMJ in the near future. Professor Southall from the Child International Advocacy Project, highly praised the book, and recommended that all health care workers should read it and possess a copy. Recording information and dissemination is essential. This book is an important aspect in the landmark of our history.

5. No doubt you are aware that, last year (1995), we had a Youth Conference, which created enthusiasm and interest among the Tamil youths to learn and understand our culture, civilisation, tradition and the common ailments that our society is afflicted with, and papers presented touched on awareness, prevention and treatment. The younger generation who attended this conference expressed great enthusiasm and interest to have further activities so that they could participate in our efforts towards helping our community. Tamil youths in various universities in UK are keen to organise a 'Youth Forum' following the above event. The second youth conference is arranged for November 1996.

6. Recently, on the 9th December 1995, under enormous difficulties, we organised a Conference at Guy's Hospital to release the book on the 'Conference Proceedings of 1994' and to address the 'Blockade' and the silent war against the Tamils. Professor Southall, Dr. Anthony Zwi, Dr. N. Sivaraja, Professor Chandra Kanthan and Dr. N. Sreeharan spoke. Following this Conference, Professor Southall is working on a project involving the United Nations, to help in solving some of the medical problems of the displaced Tamil people in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

7. The MIOT Central Committee is working on a document to be submitted to the United Nations. A memorandum being prepared, to be submitted to the Members of Parliament of this country, including the leaders of major political parties, we need to lobby them in order to get necessary redress for our ill fated and tragic stricken Tamil people. Britain has a moral duty towards the Tamils. As the initial step, MIOT representatives met the former Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Heath and discussed the present situation of the Tamils, requesting him to raise it in parliament.

8. Finally this organisation will give its members a sense of identity and belonging. MIOT membership has grown steadily and at present has nearly 300 members. Its membership comprises a wide spectrum of people with special skills, belonging to different ideologies and political convictions like any other democratic organisation. Like any community we have our strengths and weaknesses. We are striving to rise above petty and personal politics. It is time for our Tamil speaking Health care workers to develop ownership in this organisation. The time has come to ask ourselves what we can contribute to MIOT and thereby to a wider Tamil community.

Membership Drive, MIOT Central Committee, Thamil House, 720 Romford Road, Manor Park, London E12 6BT.

Festival of Cricket – 27.5.96 – Bank Holiday Monday

Sri Lankan Old Boys' Associations in the UK are organising the Eighth Annual seven-a-side Festival of Cricket on Spring Bank Holiday Monday on 27th May 1996 at Norman Park, Bromley. The main sponsors of the event are S.R. Gent International and its Chief Executive Mr. Michael Stakol who has been a tower of strength for the festival in recent years.

The 20 schools taking part are: Ananda, Colombo Hindu, Hartley, Isaipathana, Jaffna Central, Jaffna Hindu, Kokuvil Hindu, Mahinda, Nalanda, Royal, St. Anthony's, St. John's Jaffna, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's St. Peter's, St. Sebastian's, St. Thomas, Skanda Varodaya, Trinity and Zahira. This function has over the years been the best attended Sri Lankan event in the UK. This year the organisers are leaving no stone unturned to make it an even greater success. Children's Charity has been an important part of the festival to raise funds for worthy causes in Sri Lanka like the Children's Ward, Cancer Institute, Maharagama.

The high light of the day shall be the International Cricket match between the Sri Lankan Cavaliers drawn from the Sri Lanka's recently successful test team and the International Cavaliers who are Test Match players from other countries.

Norman Park which was also last year's venue of the festival is very extensive and the matches will be played on four grounds which have been specially prepared for the purpose. Around the grounds shall be several stalls providing plentiful Sri Lankan beer, strong and soft drinks and exotic Sri Lankan hot food. There shall be several trade stalls to enable patrons to buy Sri Lankan specialities and delicacies. A Hospitality Marquee located in a prime position to watch the cricket will be organised as in the past as a suitable ambience for those interested in enjoying the day in comfort with friends and colleagues with all meals and drinks catered for in an excellent environment. The spacious Norman Park has excellent parking facilities for over 6000 cars.

Entertainment for children has not been forgotten. There will be a Bouncing Castle and a fun fair too. The festival is a fine outing for the whole family to have a good day's enjoyment.

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CANADIAN NEWS LETTER

Weather: *Winter set in quite early this year in November, and continues with all round snow that functions as a great insulator against noise and a perfect purifier of air!*

Peace Petitions: *Tamils here are sad and worried about the latest developments back at home in Sri Lanka. There are meetings, discussions and other activities all over Toronto, the hub of Canada to work towards a cease fire and resumption of negotiations. Several prayer meetings have been held in Temples and Churches. Petitions signed by over 30,000 have been sent to the House of Commons of Canada urging Canadian intervention to (a) bring an immediate cease fire (b) help negotiate a guaranteed just political settlement.*

Donations for Relief *are pouring into Temples, Churches and Relief Organisations to strife stricken areas in North Sri Lanka. The Hindu Society of Canada has already sent $50,000 through the ICRC and is planning to send $25,000 more this month. The TRO here has remitted $27,000 and is expecting to send a further $37,000. Many smaller organisations and Churches have despatched thousands of dollars through the ICRC.*

Suresh's Detention: *Mr. Suresh, President of the Tamil Movement of Canada, who was detained under the Immigration Act continues to be in detention. A one day fast by The World Tamil Women's Front (Canada Branch) is due to take place in Toronto on 10th January. The organisers hope to re-awaken the conscience of Torontonians regarding the detention of Suresh without trial on alleged membership of a group considered terrorist by the Canadian Government. They want the Government to speed up the process and bring him to trial. They appear to be on a slippery wicket as in similar circumstances a Palestinian Wahid Baroud was deported last month, even after he was cleared in his trial. It is felt that the 'fast' would help to change the attitude of the Canadian Government towards liberation movements worldwide.*

A Decade of Dance Instruction: *'Narthanalaya', the premier school of Oriental Dancing celebrated its 10 years of service to the community with the graduation ceremony of its 27th graduate in October 1995. The Directress of the Institute is Smt Getha Yogendra.*

A Decade of Caring and Sharing: *The Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario with its motto of caring and sharing celebrates its Tenth Anniversary on 20th January 1996. Forty past officials of the centre will be honoured at a modest ceremony in the Woburn Auditorium, Scarborough presided over by the Mayor of the City of Toronto, Barbara Hall.*

The centre inaugurated in September 1985, had as its nucleus Senior Tamils affected by the Sri Lankan anti-Tamil pogrom of July 1983, who emigrated to Canada and settled in Toronto. Besides being concerned with their health, recreation and social benefits, they were anxious to socialise and the Senior Tamils' Centre came into being to fulfil this need. The office bearers of this organisation have been working very hard to find the necessary funds to run the centre. They were able to get a government grant but this could be utilised only for equipment. Fund raising dinners were held to keep the centre going. Over the years the centre has grown and has over 850 members now, and the activities include conducting of cultural shows, picnics, tours and seminars. It runs a well presented quarterly journal which serves as the vehicle of communication with its members and the general public at large. The centre has earned its reputation for advocacy and counselling.

Elected to Office: *Mr. S. Tharmalingam, a former Principal of Teachers' Training College, Batticaloa and Past President of The Senior Tamils' Centre, Ontario and St. John's College Past Pupils' Association, Toronto has been elected a Member of the Board of the Scarborough Legal Service, Ontario.*

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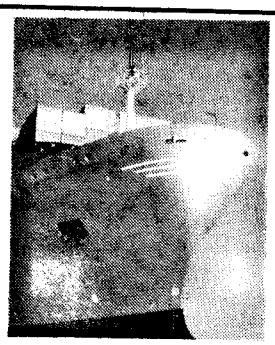

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